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SPLITTING THE POST OFFICE
The £3 billion battle

Security IV: private enterprise spooks
Mr Haughey's Irish initiative
The Tories go union bashing

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NEW STATESMAN
Volume 99 22 February 1980 No 2553

Contents

266 **Notes**
269 **De-nationalised espionage:** Duncan Campbell
272 **Prior's plans for secondary picketing:** Anthony Blair
ACAS wins: Jennie Horne
273 **Supervising the CIA:** Godfrey Hodgson
274 **Splitting the PO pension fund:** Christopher Hird
276 **Parliament can liberate local radio:** Jonathan Coe
277 **Capital taxes should remain:** Chris Pond
278 **Mr Haughey's harder line:** Mary Holland
The Campaign for Press Freedom: Anna Coote
279 **Stipendiary magistrates and black youth:** George Cunningham
280 **Legalise it:** Mike Miller and Richard Weeks
281 **London Diary:** Christopher Hitchens
282 **Letters**
283 **Arthur Marshall and Roger Woddis**
Front cover: John Minnion

Books & Arts
284 **Indira Gandhi's India:** Christopher Hitchens
285 **R. K. Narayan:** William Walsh
286 **Translating Poetry:** Michael Schmidt
287 **History Workshop 2:** Ken Worpole
289 **New Fiction:** Blake Morrison
290 **Children's Playgrounds:** Andrew Saint
291 **Television:** Julian Barnes
292 **Art:** John Spurling
293 **Theatre:** Benedict Nightingale
294 **Films:** John Coleman
294 **Opera:** Peter Conrad
295 **Weekend Competition and Chess**
296 **Crossword**
Poems by John Berger

Editor: **Bruce Page** Deputies: **Christopher Hird, Anna Coote** London Editorial Staff: **Duncan Campbell, Christopher Hitchens, Francis Wheen, Patrick Wintour** Northern Editor: **Rob Rohrer** Irish Editor: **Mary Holland** Associate Editor: **Godfrey Hodgson** Art Editor: **Vicky Hutchings** Education: **Rick Rogers** Literary & Arts Editor: **David Caute** Deputy: **Paul Binding** Editorial Assistants: **Joanne Hurst, Gillian Wilce** General Manager: **Peter Jones** Assistant Manager: **Marion Fleisher** Advertisement Manager: **Michael Roberts** Classified Manager: **Allan Sayers** Circulation Manager: **Les Sharp** Circulation Sales Manager: **Tim Freeman** Subscription Manager: **Kingsley Canham** Accountant: **Ted Peacock**

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New Statesman
10 Great Turnstile, London WC1V 7HJ
Tel: 01-405 8471 Telex: 28449
Cables: Newstat, London WC1
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NOTES

New Statespersons

Bruce Page writes: The NS masthead – just over there to the left – alters this week with the addition of Mary Holland as Irish editor and Rob Rohrer as Northern editor. Mary's name, of course, must have been familiar to NS readers for quite a while. Rob's is newer, but well-known as that of the man who broke open the Jimmy Kelly case. (For this, he was named Investigative Reporter of the Year by Granada TV's *What The Papers Say* programme.)

We aim to show that a regional editor means something more than a correspondent. Even the best of the newspapers and magazines found in these islands deal too heavily in the assumptions of London and the south-east of England, and it seems appropriate for the NS to try to buck that trend. Ireland, and the English north, are reported much of the time simply as sites of guerrilla warfare and industrial decline: those, of course, are important themes, and we don't plan to ignore them.

But there are other themes, which may originate regionally, but which have political significance in most parts of our nationally variegated set of islands. The treatment of Jimmy Kelly by the Merseyside cops is a case in point: so is the behaviour of the multinationals over the Bantry Bay disaster. Both are examples of the kind of thing we shall be pursuing further with the aid of Mary Holland and Rob Rohrer: other devolutions, of course, occur to us apart from Ireland and the Liverpool/Manchester complex. But this is still a small outfit, and we have to build bit-by-bit.

Battle of the West Bank

Ian Black writes from Jerusalem: A hitherto quiet struggle for the political leadership of the occupied West Bank of the Jordan may well become more vocal on Saturday when several radical Palestinian mayors cross the river to Amman to attend a meeting of the joint Jordanian-PLO committee on the occupied territories. The committee, which was set up following the November 1978 anti-Sadat Baghdad summit conference, is the one tangible achievement of the much vaunted rapprochement between the Hashemite kingdom and the PLO. But so far, the West Bank radicals complain, Jordan has sat firmly on the available funds and the PLO has acquiesced all too readily in this.

The struggle reflects the complex balance of forces between Jordan and the PLO, on the one hand, and between rival groups within the Palestinian umbrella organisation on the other. Jordan's 'abdication' of responsibility for the West Bank at the 1974 Rabat summit has had the long-term effect of shifting the politics of the occupied territories boldly leftwards.

Traditional, pro-Hashemite figures, once denounced by the PLO as lackeys of King Hussein, now find themselves on good terms with the PLO's mainstream, which, anxious to remain friends with the Jordanians, is prepared to let these people retain their power and influence in the West Bank. Thus in recent months, while refusing to join the peace process, the Jordanians have been quietly boosting their influence locally: channelling cash to traditional sectors such as olive growers, backing Islamic institutions, increasing salaries to their officials and trying, so far unsuccessfully, to re-open passport offices in the major West Bank towns.

None of this, of course, is to the liking of the radicals, men like Bassam Shaka of Nablus, Karim Khalaf of Ramallah and several prominent left-wingers who are less well known than the mayors but very influential behind the scenes. They would like all the Baghdad summit (and other) cash, currently coming through the joint committee in Amman, to be channelled directly to them, and not to municipalities, village councils or other bastions of Jordanian influence.

Jordan is highly unlikely to agree to this. It would mean a further retreat from the West Bank at a time when it wishes to retain its clout there. And the PLO mainstream, terrified that the rapprochement with Amman might fall apart and Hussein 'do a Sadat' on them, will not want to let the radicals mess things up for them.

Unless something quite surprising happens in Amman on Saturday, the split between the radical West Bankers and the PLO – and Jordan – will grow, which will not hinder the Israelis in their pursuit of an 'autonomy' that includes settlement all over 'Judea and Samaria.' Now that Egypt and Israel are at peace, the West Bank, more than ever before, is the key to comprehensive peace. And neither Arafat nor Hussein want to lose that key to a group of radicals in the occupied territories.

The man who would be President

Claudia Wright writes from Washington: In foreign policy, the Republican contenders for the presidency differ from one another (and from the President) only by degrees of maniacal vindictiveness towards the rest of the world. But George Bush, who won the Puerto Rico primary on Sunday, stands out as having rather more experience than the others. He served as US ambassador to the UN for two years (1971-73), head of the US liaison office in Peking (1974-75) and director of the CIA – for the last year of the Ford administration (1976). While he cracks only two adjectival compliments in the Kissinger memoirs – 'valient' and 'able' – more is known about his performance than the press has so far been willing to tell.

At the CIA, he was responsible for the embarrassing loss of $1,376,700 intended to pay off the remnants of the right-wing Angolan rebel forces but actually pocketed by President Mobutu of Zaire. Bush directed a good deal of money and weaponry into Ethiopia during 1976, and then forfeited both boodle and regime to the Soviets and Cubans. If the authorities in Tehran were obliging, we might also understand more about the candidate's appreciation for the Shah.

George Bush: If elected, I will blow up the world.

Bush is evidently a character who smarts from the accusation of being a loser – of Angola, of Ethiopia, and of two campaigns for a Senate seat in Texas – and in a soon-to-be-released interview in the *Los Angeles Times*, he displays the nastiest streak yet uncovered in this year's campaign. Irritated at being asked tough questions that followed upon his answers – not something the campaign press corps has subjected him to – he told the interviewer he could envisage a nuclear exchange between the USSR and the US from which enough Americans would emerge to declare themselves winners of World War III (about 5 per cent was his estimate).

This is much tougher talk than Mr Reagan's proposal to supply Afghan mountainmen with missiles for knocking down Soviet helicopters, or Mr Connally's suggestion of US bases in the Sinai and Negev to police the Middle East.

So far Bush has been cosseted by the press. The only useful information published about him is old stuff, only now finding its way on to the front pages, about an illegal $6,000 cash donation allegedly handed to Bush for his 1970 Senate campaign from a Nixon slush fund uncovered by the Watergate investigation.

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Until now Carter has been able to match every dare the Republicans have put up to him. He is supplying arms (covertly) to the Afghan rebels; he is exercising air force planes from Egyptian bases and will soon establish operations from Oman. As Bush isn't hesitating at the prospect of nuclear war with the Soviet Union, neutralising him is somewhat more difficult for a President intent on appropriating Republican positions while stretching to retain the majority of Democrats. Therefore, despite considerable misgivings that it would play into Kennedy's hands, Carter has been pushed into proposing registration for military conscription.

There are two things wrong with this. The American people are extremely reluctant to support mobilisation for war. And even if the adult population is worried about the Soviets, this is not the time of year for them to try to persuade their 19-year-old children to sign up. For it is almost spring thaw – the traditional season for adolescent mayhem. The President comes from the South, where the phenomenon is limited to raids on female dormitories, male flashing and the swarming of thousands of students on the beach at Fort Lauderdale, Florida, in the first days of March. In the North, in New Hampshire and Massachusetts, where political activism has substituted for sex in the past, a student anti-draft movement could overwhelm Mr Carter's calculations and confront him with his first massive demonstrations, scheduled in Washington for 22 March. Those protesters are hardly likely to adopt Kennedy as an anti-war candidate, but they will make the President appear vulnerable again, impelling both Carter and the Republican candidates to concoct new, if no less phoney positions in an election campaign over readiness for doomsday.

High cost of equality

Anna Coote writes: The case of Croydon schoolgirl Helen Whitfield demonstrates a major failing of Britain's legal system: that testing the law is a privilege of the rich and the poor must take what crumbs are offered in the lower courts. Helen sued Croydon Borough Council for a breach of the Sex Discrimination Act and lost the first stage of her battle last December in the County Court. Now she wants to appeal – and has strong grounds for doing so. But if she can't find something near to £5,000 she'll have to drop the case altogether.

Her complaint is that Woodcote High School, which she attended from the age of 11, provided craft work (woodwork, metal work and design technology) for boys, and home economics (cookery and needle work) for girls. Helen wanted to do craft work and was at first refused entry to the course. Only after a year, when one of the boys had dropped out, creating a vacancy, was she offered a place. At that point, she turned the offer down – not wanting to be a lone girl in a class of boys who were, by that time, a whole year ahead of her.

She contends that allowing a girl to *opt in*, as an exception, to a course given automatically to boys, amounts to 'less favourable treatment' under the Sex Discrimination Act. The Equal Opportunities Commission agreed to back her case and heralded it as a vital test of the law which could 'point the way to widespread changes in timetabling practice'. But a year later it withdrew, apparently because it was afraid Helen would lose, although its knowledge of the case had not substantially altered.

Helen's lawyers managed to obtain legal aid for the county court hearing. An expert witness from the Engineering Industry Training Board testified that skills acquired in craft work were essential for school leavers wanting to enter certain job training courses. Nevertheless, Judge Perks ruled that the girls had been treated differently from the boys but not 'less favourably'.

Legal aid has been refused for the appeal – because its chief purpose is to test the law, not to protect an injured party. (Helen is claiming only nominal damages and is now too old, at 14, to benefit personally from a successful appeal.) Last month, an appeal fund was launched at a Cambridge education conference: if it fails to raise the necessary cash by the end of next week, the appeal may have to be dropped – leaving this new and difficult area of law untested. There is evidence that *most* schools still exclude girls from craft work unless they are strong-willed and non-conformist enough to gain permission to opt in. Until the law is clarified, that practice will not change.

Donations and pledges to the Helen Whitfield Appeal Fund, c/o Lloyds Bank, Market Square, Highworth, Swindon, Wilts.

Young unionists rattle their cages

Patrick Wintour writes: The TUC's paternalistic nod at youth, its annual one-day youth conference, ended last Friday with two-thirds of the young delegates telling their elders where to get off. During the conference over 60 of the delegates handed Terry Parry, this year's TUC chairman, a petition criticising the undemocratic structure of the gathering. Earlier a CPSA delegate had tried to raise the 'pre-arranged' agenda as a point of order: Mr Parry replied that since the conference had no constitution there could be no point of order. He told critics to raise their complaints through their respective unions at the TUC's annual congress.

Ever since the TUC set up the youth conference in 1974 it has been wary of giving young people – some of whom may be dangerous radicals – any real say at Congress House. There are no votes or motions at the conference. The agenda is entirely predetermined by the TUC general council. So all that occurs is a purposeless debate about a discussion document on mainstream TUC issues such as microprocessors, with each debate opened and closed by the platform.

On the platform this year were the 58-year-old Mr Parry, the TUC's two assistant general secretaries (both in their forties), two officials from the Tobacco Workers' Union and one from Nalgo, (all into middle age).

There is no TUC youth advisory committee, let alone an established right of delegates to elect one. Yet the Scottish TUC has an advisory youth committee while the women's conference elects some members of the women's TUC advisory committee. A TUC spokesperson says that the youth conference has no democratic structure for 'organisational and administrative reasons. There would be a danger that motions passed by the youth conference might contradict those passed by the TUC conference. All subordinate conferences have to abide by Congress decisions.'

Land of the rising son

Donald Kirk writes from Tokyo: They gather nightly in a little pub called Charleston, on a side street in Tokyo's glittering Roppongi district, popular among foreigners since American GIs lived there after the war. Models and hostesses who could hardly get a leg up in the big-time of Europe and America make a fortune off the Japanese mania for foreign chic.

'Why go back to London when I can make ten thousand dollars a month over here.' said the rather coarse daughter of a British police officer, alternating between hostessing at one of Tokyo's swankier rip-off cabarets, posing for ads and doubtless making whatever she could on the side. 'I couldn't possibly work as a model back home.'

It was in the same spirit of exploiting foreign flesh that Kanebo Textiles offered Prime Minister Thatcher's son, Mark, ten thousand pounds and a promise to sponsor his career as a racing car driver if he would only prance about in the group's latest imitation leather suits. Having signed Ingrid Bergman's daughter, Isabella Rossellini, to model last year, Kanebo executives were aghast at the response from London.

Mark Thatcher: 'attractive to women'

Camera Press

'The press found this juicy opportunity to exploit the thing without any reasonable explanation other than this terrible non-patriotic event.' said a Kanebo official, professing 'astonishment' at what had happened to force Mark to renege on the deal. Was Kanebo not guilty of 'exploitation' as well? 'That's a pretty subjective judgment,' came the answer, 'He's very international and attractive to women. He would have posed in his racing suit made from our Belleseime fabric. The point was not that he was Margaret Thatcher's son but that his individual character was appropriate.'

Indeed. Why then did Kanebo Textiles' sister company, Kanebo Cosmetics, publish pictures of the Prime Minister in an ad embellished with its 'healthy life' slogan just as she was arriving here last June for the Tokyo summit? 'It was all approved by the British Embassy,' was the disingenuous explanation. 'They said the ad was acceptable.' British diplomats rather lamely say they gave Kanebo a stock photo of Thatcher *mère*, as they would for anyone who asked, begging Kanebo please not to claim she was using Kanebo cosmetics. 'We're trying to persuade any company from this kind of endorsement,' said one diplomatic source, rudely awakened to the implications. 'Our feeling is it's not quite right for people in public office to be involved in advertising', even if, he added, 'the Japanese are obviously intrigued by the Thatcher name.'

Loosening the ties

Steve Schifferes writes: The 1980 Housing Bill provides measures which affect nearly everyone in private and public housing except for the million households in tied accommodation. The only measure in recent years that helped this group was the Rent (Agriculture) Act 1976, which abolished tied cottages for agricultural workers, but these make up only 10 per cent of all those in tied accommodation. Most of the remainder are not even tenants in the legal sense, but licensees, who lack even the right to a month's notice to quit. This obviously affects the bargaining position of such workers and it is not surprising that tied accommodation is predominant in some of the most low paid industries.

Shelter's proposals, published this week in *The Forgotten Problem**, are to bring everyone in tied accommodation within the scope of the Rent Acts (thereby improving their security of tenure) and to bring the rehousing obligations on local authorities for tied workers broadly into line with those of the Rent (Agriculture) Act – which is working well. This would redress the balance of power between employers and their tenants. In the long run the only way to reduce the unhealthy dependence on tied accommodation is to provide more low-cost rented housing.

*Obtainable from Shelter, 157 Waterloo Road, London SE1. Price £2 + 15p P & P.

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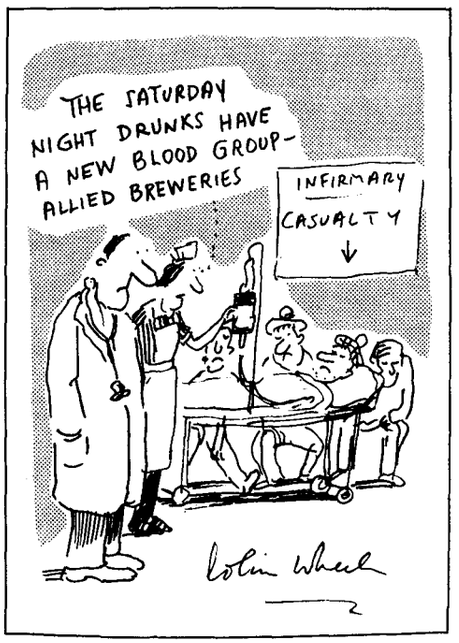
Cup that fails to cheer

Roger Protz writes: Allied Breweries, Britiain's biggest drinks combine and a generous donor to Tory Party funds, is extending its brewing tentacles into Scotland, where choice is already restricted due to the domination of two other brewing conglomerates. Allied, which markets under the Ind Coope, Tetley and Ansells labels, is anxious to muscle in on Scotland's 'tied house' territory – pubs directly owned by brewers. Unless the Director General of Fair Trading intervenes, Allied will take over all the 214 pubs and bars owned by Lorimer, an Edinburgh company with two breweries in the Scottish capital. As part of the deal, one of the Lorimer breweries will close.

At present Scottish & Newcastle and Tennent Caledonian (a Bass subsidiary) control 70 per cent of the tied trade in Scotland. Allied's acquisitions will mean that 86 per cent of the tied trade will be



dominated by just three companies.

Scotland, unlike England, also has a massive 'free trade' of pubs and clubs owned by individuals or small companies that are nominally free of the big brewers. The free trade in Scotland represents nearly 50 per cent of the total beer market. But the 1977 Price Commission's report on brewing showed how the major brewers, through loans and other cash inducements, dominate the free trade as effectively as the tied outlets and Allied is keen to get a foothold in the Scottish free trade alongside Bass and S&N.

The Price Commission's report highlighted not only the financial inducements offered by the beer giants in order to squeeze out smaller firms from the free trade, but also the inefficiency and waste of the conglomerates who account for 80 per cent of all beer brewed in Britiain. Allied's bid for the Lorimer pubs underscores that point, for the combine admits that it has sufficient spare capacity at its Alloa brewery to supply the 214 outlets.

According to the Campaign for Real Ale, behind the Lorimer bid lies the fact that Allied has expanded too fast at Alloa and has spare capacity there. It is seeking to mask this inefficiency, CAMRA claims, by buying the Lorimer pubs to soak up the capacity available at Alloa. CAMRA has asked the Director General of Fair Trading to refer the Allied bid to the Monopolies and Mergers Commission but the odds are that the deal will be given the go-ahead by 27 February. Allied Breweries were second only to Taylor Woodrow in their generosity to the Tories in election year and they will not expect any hindrance to their expansion plans in Scotland, even if the plans do attack two pillars of Tory philosophy – competition and choice.

Italy's rulers ignore the Communists

Tana de Zulueta writes from Rome: The Christian Democrat Party Congress which closed in Rome this week was to settle the thorniest of all political problems: whether or not to bring Italy's Communist Party (PCI) into government. After five days of whistles, cat-calls and skirmishes in the pit, it was clear, however, that the meeting had degenerated into a family row. The Barons of the Christian Democrat factions hurled their troops at each other, jousting more for party leadership than any solution to the political stalemate.

The present minority government led by the Christian Democrat Francesco Cossiga, in alliance with the smallest 'lay' parties – the Social Democrats, Liberals and Republicans – was the result of the political 'truce' called this summer. The Socialists, whose outside support is crucial to the government, have already declared it defunct.

'We may leave this congress without any solution to the problem of government', warned a follower of the outgoing party secretary, Benigno Zaccagnini, but he was shouted down. In his opening speech Zaccagnini had cautiously suggested that the time was ripe at least to open negotiations with the PCI on a joint government. He offered the PCI almost insurmountable conditions, but the idea was to get talking. The Communist envoy had been encouraged. The secretary's speech, he said, contained 'important new elements'.

He was backing the wrong horse. *L'Osservatore Romano*, the Vatican paper, which under Pope John Paul II had so far avoided taking sides in Italian politics, noted with evident satisfaction that 'there is a strong feeling that it is not in an alliance with the PCI that the [Christian Democrat] party can find its true collocation'. All proponents of a deal with the Communists were booed off.

To shore up a future government the Christian Democrats must now turn to the Socialists – who in turn are deeply divided and most uncertain of the advantages of such an alliance. It is doubtful, however, that both parties will be able to ignore the Communists for long. Their opposition, so far, has been remarkably tame. But for the PCI too the truce is over, and with 30 per cent of Italian voters behind them they should still be a force to be reckoned with.

Carter ends boycott

Denis MacShane writes from Geneva: The handing over of a letter earlier this week from the United States ambassador in Switzerland marks the end of a two-year boycott by America of one of the world's biggest international agencies, the International Labour Office. The ILO, technically an agency of the United Nations though its origins go back to 1919, brings together representatives of governments, employers and trade unions to debate world labour problems, set international standards of health and safety for workers, and then try to persuade member states to ratify conventions upholding them.

America's boycott is a hangover from the Kissinger years: although America left in 1977 it was the former Secretary of State who gave the ILO the formal two years' notice of withdrawal in 1975. Kissinger complained that Third World and Soviet bloc countries were using the ILO for the passing of political motions unrelated to worldwide labour questions. Motions condemning Israel were regularly pushed through without the Israelis being allowed to defend themselves – a practice contrary to the ILO constitution. The anti-Israeli campaign was especially galling to western members of the ILO as it is the only state in the region with an independent trade union movement. Efforts on the other hand to raise the question of trade union rights and organisation inside Russia were slapped down.

The decision to leave was nonetheless a strange one, given that America had been a member since 1934, joining the ILO and recognising its worth at a time of total isolation from other international bodies. Kissinger's tactics appear to have half-worked. The ILO itself survived, despite a loss of 20 per cent of its income. But its director-general, Francis Blanchard, has forced non-labour issues off the agenda, re-introduced secret voting and insisted that states accused of violating ILO conventions are allowed to enter a defence.

In a terse two sentence statement Carter announced America's re-entry: this had long been urged by United States employers and unions who, while they shared Kissinger's dislike of the behaviour at the ILO and were happy to see it taught a lesson, felt even more uneasy about accusations of leaving other western countries to shoulder all the burden of ILO finance and to direct the work of its 3,000 staff.

Except in labour circles America's two-year boycott of this important UN agency has gone largely unremarked. But the precedent for a walk-out and boycott at international level has now been set as an instrument of American foreign policy.

BL's rickety cars

Patrick Wintour writes: Before the ballot on the Edwardes Plan, now causing unforeseen and expensive lay-offs, Sir Michael Edwardes told the emergency committee of unions at British Leyland that all the information they needed to assess the 1980 corporate plan would be made available. A month after the ballot the unions learnt of three entirely new models – the Broadside, the Boxer and the Bravo. Along with the Mini Metro, the Bounty and the LC10 (a replacement for the Allegro), these three hitherto undisclosed cars are supposed to form the nucleus of British Leyland's future. The worrying thing about the cars is that Leyland seem to be in a high state of chaos about them.

The Boxer, an MG version of the TR7/8, has no production timetable. Since there is no major workload involved (it is largely a question of giving it a minor facelift and badging it into the MG culture) it is the most plausible of the three models. It was to be built at Canley (now under threat of closure) but may now be moved to Solihull, where the design centre is. The Bravo is the replacement for the now unsuccessful Rover and is to be built at Solihull. Pre-production is set for autumn 1983, and launch for autumn 1984 with a five-door version scheduled for 1985, but as yet there is no project book. No styling work has yet been done on it. The intention is to make the market life of the failed Rover as short as possible, but to get two new cars ready so quickly is impossible. One week management rush into the design engineers at Solihull and tell them to work on the Boxer; the next week it is the Bravo.

The third car, the Broadside, is a new sports car and will be built at Solihull. The launch date is 1983. The styling package is said to be already prepared in the US, but critics say the only way in which the car could be ready in time is if BL is ordering the dies and the machine tools from outside. Edwardes seems to be calling up teams of engineers who don't exist, and the whole programme will have to involve even more massive outsourcing of engineering work than has already been tabled.

These long term problems will be overshadowed this week by the decision of Longbridge workers on Wednesday not to strike in an attempt to reinstate their dismissed Convenor Derek Robinson. Once the AUEW leadership had refused to defend Robinson, his plight became lost in the general Leyland maelstrom. Having been through three major strikes in the last twelve months and still faced with the unresolved issues of pay and grading – not to mention working practices, for the Metro, which is to be built at the plant, Longbridge workers obviously decided that a matter of principle such as Robinson's dismissal was dispensable.

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Salesmen of the secret world

Last week, the Labour Party launched a long-overdue campaign to get Britain's proliferating 'security services' back under public control. The enterprise is still an infant one, compared even to what has been achieved in the US (see page 273). But the chief problem it faces is to identify the boundaries of the security state – to show where official lawbreaking ends, and purely private thuggery begins. We have already shown that the official agencies enjoy enormous powers of snooping and surveillance – the fruits of which they are prepared to use in viciously irresponsible campaigns against anyone whose politics they either disapprove of, or simply misunderstand. But the official agencies are surrounded by a penumbra of private enterprises, some of which are self-enrichment schemes by ex-officers, and some of which are cover for 'sensitive' official missions – and some of which are a little of each. So comprehensively blurred are the lines of responsibility that it is impossible to say who makes British policy in the matter of – say – selling interrogation techniques to an African dictatorship, or the matter of which side receives support in a Middle Eastern rebellion. DUNCAN CAMPBELL, continuing his anatomy of the security state, shows how 'bugging' and 'black bag' experts move in and out of private enterprise – and reveals yet another government bugging centre.

THE FICTIONS of Le Carré and Deighton have made everyone familiar with the idea of 'front' companies staffed by intelligence agents: this familiarity, perhaps, has blinded people to the dangers involved. The factual history of Diversified Corporate Services Ltd provides a much-needed corrective.

DCS, whose personnel list over the years reads like a *Who's Who* of the secret world, had its beginnings just after 1970, when the security men – with Labour out of the way – could look forward to a more freebooting future. The company always had some straight-forward commercial-security business, but until 1977, or thereabouts, DCS also provided two kinds of facilities to the secret world. First, using a team of specialists in surveillance, 'surreptitious entry', bugging, tapping, debugging and so on, they provided training for intelligence agencies of other governments which HMG was anxious to assist, but only at 'arm's length'. Second, DCS employees were able to 'freelance' for the Secret Service (MI6) carrying out overseas operations too hot for official involvement.

Our sources for the tale of DCS include three intelligence officials (one still active), with direct knowledge of the company's activities. They recognise that it was an 'unusual' way for MI6 to work – though the word in this context seems to be a euphemism for 'irregular', rather than an index of rarity. DCS was 'never hired directly', we were told, 'but always through a cut-out'. However, operational reports, once completed, would be 'handed directly on to MI5 or MI6'.

Company registration documents give some details of the people who held shares in, or were employed by, DCS during the '70s. The personnel came almost entirely from MI6, the Intelligence Corps, or from other secret departments: and in this area of government service at least the much-touted aim of free interchange between public and private sectors was readily achieved. One ex-army officer who joined DCS in the mid-'70s moved on to work for MI6. And we were told of another ex-Intelligence Corps officer who in 1976 worked half-time for DCS and half-time for the Cabinet Office – presumably the Joint Intelligence Staff – leaving DCS when his Cabinet Office job became full-time. We put this to the officer concerned, Colonel Peter Goss. He does not deny it.

Secretly, but by behest of the British Government, DCS trained intelligence agents for Oman, Nigeria and other countries. Secret missions were carried out in Oman, Iran, Sudan and elsewhere in Africa and the Middle East. Training schools were set up in Enfield and in Wandsworth: these were intended to be secret, but, as will appear, they did not always manage to be. Overtly, DCS undertook security work for merchant bankers like Barings and Hill Samuel.

THE PRINCIPAL DIRECTOR of DCS since its foundation in 1970 has been Colonel Alan B. Pemberton, who lives at Stoke by Nayland, near Colchester. He does not possess intelligence connections: he is an ex-Guards officer, said to have excellent banking connections.

The company's name, at least, traces back to two ancestor concerns. During the late 1960s, Diversified Business Intelligence, a partnership between ex-MI6 men and private detectives, operated from St James's. Two important figures were John Farmer and his son-in-law John Richard Pilkington, both with substantial MI6 experience.

Farmer moved to America, and set up Diversified Corporate Services (International) Inc, with the aid of several ex-CIA people. In October 1970 Diversified Corporate Services Ltd was registered in the UK, with offices at Orchard House, Great Smith Street, SW1. (Sanctuary Buildings, the same block, is used by various Foreign Office departments.) The company's articles specified its purposes as being

> . . .general defensive security agents, consultants and advisers. . . (providing) all kinds of advice in regard to security, and to sell equipment in connection with defensive security. . .

'Defensive', in such contexts, often means just the opposite, and those who joined Colonel Pemberton were usually more conspicuous for their 'offensive' intelligence credentials. His first co-director was John Pilkington, describing himself as a 'security consultant', and in May 1972 another long-term MI6 officer named Roy Astley-Richards joined, described as a 'special consultant'.

Reputedly, Astley-Richards' secret career began with a spell as bodyguard to Winston Churchill. He left DCS in 1977. Pilkington left earlier in 1973, to set up 'International Co-Ordinated Services SA' in Rome. This, according to our sources, was intended to be the 'Italian end' of DCS, and training of Omani agents was moved to Rome for geographical convenience. Pilkington agreed this week that he was in 'government security' work until 1969, when he joined first Diversified Business Intelligence and then DCS. But he claimed that his Italian company had never supplied anything other than 'construction services' to the Middle East.

'SAFE HOUSE' at Enfield provided one of the bases for DCS training operations: this,

Colonel Alan B. Pemberton, the boss of DCS, demonstrates his electronic 'debugging' equipment to the *Observer* newspaper in 1973. His 'going public' created a rumpus among the secret agencies who had arranged intelligence and security business for DCS.

DCS
VIRTUTE ET LABORE
DIVERSIFIED CORPORATE SERVICES LIMITED
Incorporating COMMUNICATION SECURITY LIMITED
ORCHARD HOUSE, 14 GREAT SMITH STREET, LONDON SW1P 3BU

Camera Press

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too, was arranged by Astley-Richards, who according to a former colleague was

> brilliant at arranging safe houses . . . he would fix up the cover, get it decorated. . . arrange housekeeping at a discreet distance. He also arranged for the trainees to be accommodated at hotels which didn't ask awkward questions.

One of the training activities was to practise 'surreptitious entry' at the Enfield house, removing supposed 'secret documents'. During 1973, one such operation came grievously unstuck – commencing the company's fall from official grace – when two black trainees were observed by neighbours, entering the house less covertly then was desirable. The local police were called, and imprisoned the unhappy pair, who were only released after the intervention of a senior Special Branch officer.

It was in this period, we were told, that DCS clients included secret agents from Nigeria, Oman, Ghana, and Sudan. Overseas operations were carried out on behalf of MI6, and although our sources are sensitive about details, it is acknowledged that there were operations in 'friendly' countries as well.

As the Enfield debacle was not unique, the value of DCS to the Secret Service began to wane. Nonetheless, another 'safe house' was acquired, apparently in 1974, at 75 Bolingbroke Grove SW11, close to Wandsworth Common. According to the present residents, DCS moved out in 1978. A private detective who investigated DCS during the 1974-78 period told us how he observed rather conspicious squads of security trainees from Africa and the Middle East doing physical training in the middle of the Common.

Exercising its rights as a closed company, DCS filed no turnover figures during its years of maximum activity during the early 1970s. Accounts for 1977 record an income of £26,869 attributable to their 'training school', out of a turnover of £140,000. Since 1977, with the cut-off of MI6-connected business, the company's fortunes have become still more modest, and it has moved to offices in Hampstead Road NW1, near Euston station.

THE COMPANY had colourful instructors during its hey-day. Major 'Freddy' Mace, who joined shortly after DCS's foundation, had been a specialist in covert entry – less politely, breaking and entering – at the Intelligence Centre in Ashford, Kent, HQ of the Intelligence Corps. He had by 1970 received some modest press publicity for his Houdini-like exploits against locked doors and impenetrable barriers. (Ashford and its courses were described in one pop-weekly series in 1973 as a 'school for Bonds'. One major obstacle on the covert entry course was described as a mock-up of No. 10 Downing Street, installed secretly at Templer Barracks, where the Intelligence Centre has its home.)

Mace received more publicity in 1977, by which time he had moved on from DCS to a new company, Donne Holdings Ltd. Its remarkable, and confidential, sales brochure was exposed in the *Sunday Times* as offering courses in: 'Basic and advanced sabotage; Silent killing; Interrogation; Technical intrusion.'

The company, whose prime mover was another ex-I-Corps man named John Donne, boasted that it could sell the very latest skills of the British SAS – the elite army unit which often functions as an adjunct to the secret agencies. Donne Holdings were offering security locks and safes, and secret code equipment developed by a former employee of GCHQ, the government 'eavesdropping' centre at Cheltenham.

On Donne's death Mace had become managing director, and included the Libyan government of Colonel Quadhafi among his clients. According to some sources, the Libyans approached Mace while he was still working for DCS in 'official' private enterprise. Just how 'privately' Donne Holdings was trading in publicly financed dirty-trickery is not clear: in 1976 Mace's visiting card still claimed that Donne were approved as 'suppliers to HM Government'.

JOHNNY JOHNSTONE, another early DCS instructor, was originally a technical specialist with the Foreign Office's Department of Communications. Although this has been concerned (under various names) with legitimate communications questions, it also deals with bugging and other covert operations. Johnstone was unluckily caught in the backlash of a British attempt to bug the US mission in Berlin during the early Sixties. He retired early, but according to one MI6 source, continued acting as a 'cut-out' for 12 years thereafter, making untraceable purchases of bugs and other equipment for government clients.

By 1966 he was running a security company named Industrial Security CIA (for 'Counter-Intelligence Agency'), speaking quite publicly of his 'anti-bug' and general security skills. He helped set up Diversified Business Intelligence, and then joined DCS in 1970. He continued to buy bugs for official use or trial, though demarcation lines were understandably hairy. One witness recalls seeing him leave the premises of a bug-manufacturer in 1975 to trundle straight off to the DCS office in Westminster.

His old Foreign Office department remains involved with the spook business, labelled as HMG Communications Centre (HMGCC) at Hanslope Park, near Milton Keynes. It does indeed provide and control government communications, but it also buys bugs, and has advertised for 'locksmiths. . . used to working unsupervised on strongrooms and safes'.

The former chief engineer of a security electronics company has shown us evidence of his company's supplies of bugging and debugging equipment to HMGCC. Since, to the annoyance of commercial bug-makers, only small quantities are bought, the purpose would seem to be testing and comparison against the government's own devices.

The unit most involved in bugging work is the Diplomatic Telecommunications Maintenance Service (DTMS), which has offices in London as well as Hanslope Park. Together with MI5, DTMS was responsible for the bugging of Harold Wilson at Downing Street and Westminster – well-publicised by Chapman Pincher in the *Daily Express*. Also, DTMS took part in the massive bugging and tapping operations during the Rhodesia negotiations at Lancaster House.

It appears that personnel associated with DCS supplied *de-bugging* services on both these occasions. Private 'sweeping' was arranged for Wilson in 1975, and carried out by a team hired, directly or indirectly, from DCS. During the Lancaster House conference, it became obvious to both Joshua Nkomo and Robert Mugabe that they were under surveillance. 'Tiny' Rowland of Lonrho, who supported Nkomo's trip financially, hired on his behalf a sweeping team from DCS. It is hard not to wonder about the value of assistance from firms so closely associated with the secret services themselves.

SENIOR GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS also flitted in and out of the DCS business. Pemberton himself mentioned two of them in an interview with the *Observer* business section in May 1973 (when he was modestly eager to publicise anti-bug capacity). They were John O'Connor OBE, formerly of the Home Office 'Communications Division', and Major-General Sir John Anderson, who retired as Assistant Chief of the Defence Staff for Signals in May 1972. Between 1974 and 1976 Anderson was a director of DCS, after which he went to Brussels as Director of NATO's Integrated Communications System Management Agency (NICSMA). 1976 was also the year in which Colonel Goss passed briefly through DCS en route to full-time work in the Cabinet Office. (Goss said this week that he 'wasn't prepared to discuss any government or military service'.)

All this suggests that 1976-77 marks the time when DCS was reduced to being a private concern of Colonel Pemberton's. The shares which Goss and Anderson had owned were transferred to Pemberton's two sons. But some training contracts seem to have been retained, together with arrangements to handle scrambling equipment made by a Swiss company called Gretag. Today, apart from confirming that DSC is still operative, Colonel Pemberton has little to say.

> People like myself in this sort of business should be able to treat their affairs as confidential. I don't like these inquiries at all.

Roy Astley-Richards said he was 'not prepared to discuss anything' concerning work with DCS or the government. One ex-employee said: 'We did government work, yes. But that's none of your business.'

There is something remarkable in official tolerance of wholesale marketing of supposedly-secret intelligence expertise – especially when coupled with hysterical attacks on any public discussion of security operations. But, more seriously, 'commercial' involvement in providing security for unsavoury – and potentially unstable – regimes can involve Britain in foreign-policy disasters without anyone having taken real responsibility for their origins. Those who suffer from the attentions of British-trained 'covert entry specialists' or 'silent killers' cannot be expected to draw fine distinctions about private and public enterprise when the British parliament is quite unable to do so.

Recently (28 July 1978) the NS exposed the remarkable example of KMS Ltd (now Saladin Security Ltd) which was selling the government's own security experts back to it, sometimes even before their official service had terminated. The antecedents of KMS/Saladin are such as to make the firm a strange ally for any government department: during the Sixties some of its principals (strongly linked to the secret world) were involved with a full-scale war in the Yemen which was in flat opposition to declared British foreign policy. The question of just who was in charge then has never been resolved: an immediately contemporary, but related, problem is the question of who trained the Shah's much-hated SAVAK thugs. The Shah has said it was done in Britain. By the government? Or by the 'alternative government' of the secret world?

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Secret Orchards

A major television play from a remarkable true story.

'We all have our secret orchards – you have no right to pry into mine . . .'

Roger Ackerley, a wealthy and respectable businessman, kept his double life secret until his death in 1929. Only then did his son Joe discover his father's other family – three daughters, living only a few miles away with their mother.

'All these years he was smashing to pieces the sacred rules, laughing at all of us. Why could he not have told me? We might have been friends . . .'

Secret Orchards is a two-hour play on film by William Trevor, based on *My Father and Myself* by J R Ackerley and *The Secret Orchard of Roger Ackerley* by Diana Petre.

On ITV Wednesday 27 February at 8pm.

GRANADA TELEVISION

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UNIONS
Anthony Blair

Prior's plans on secondary picketing are a recipe for a lawyers' jamboree

Thatcherism, logic and the law

DURING THE LAST WEEK the government has fired the first shots in a long campaign against the trade union movement. Three vital proposals have been canvassed: a trade unionist's immunity from the law is to be limited to the first customer or first supplier of the employer with whom he or she is in dispute; supplementary benefit is to be withdrawn under the notorious 'deeming' provisions which will force – or try to force – unions to pay strike benefit; and unions are to be liable again in damages for industrial action which is outside the statutory immunity. These proposals are not moderate. They are a concerted attempt to destroy the effectiveness of industrial action. On the one hand, the ambit of lawful industrial action will be severely limited. On the other, if what is permitted is to be effective, strikes will have to be longer and the drain on union funds will become progressively insupportable. It is not an exaggeration to say that if these proposals were law then the present steel strike would almost certainly have failed by now.

As everybody now knows, under the present law a trade unionist has immunity from legal action when acting in furtherance of a trade dispute. Despite a fierce rearguard action by the Court of Appeal, the House of Lords in the *MacShane* case and the private steel case has shown beyond doubt that this is the law.

The Employment Bill as it now stands limits the right to picket to the workplace of those picketing but does not deal with the effect of the Lords' decisions. The consultative document published on Wednesday is the Tories' response. Industrial action is to be lawful against the employer with whom the union is in dispute or his 'first' customers or 'first' suppliers. Against anyone else it will be illegal. Take the *MacShane* case. The NUJ was in dispute with the local press. It called on its Press Association members to stop supplying copy to the provincial papers. Some members, fearful for their jobs, refused. The NUJ then called on its members in the national papers not to handle PA copy until the PA stopped supplying copy to the local papers. The Tories' proposal would make the call to PA members lawful but the call to members in the national papers unlawful. Sympathetic action would be most definitely out.

The proposal itself is fraught with legal difficulty. What about chains of interlinked companies, all with separate legal identity but in reality the same body: are they all 'first' customers or suppliers? Can unlimited industrial action be taken against 'first' customers or suppliers, or are there to be limits? How far can those not involved in the dispute take action against the union because the supplier or customer is unable to fulfil contracts with them? Who qualifies as 'first' customers or suppliers? They must, it appears, be 'substantial' customers or suppliers and the courts are going to be allowed to decide what that means.

The proposal is not even logical in terms of the Tories' own ideology. Why should there be a difference between 'first' customers or suppliers and others? If the purpose of the limitation of industrial action is to prevent 'innocent' parties being affected by a trade dispute, then the 'first' customers or suppliers are no less 'innocent' than others. This illogic is a firm indication that the proposal is only the first stage of a deliberate design which has as its ultimate object the abolition of the right to take any form of sympathetic action.

THAT IS ONE arm of the pincer. The other is the attack on trade union funds. The proposal announced last week by the Government to deprive strikers of an amount of supplementary benefit equal to the amount 'deemed' to be payable by their union as strike benefit is vindictive and cruel. The family of a criminal in prison does not forfeit the right to social security but the family of trade unionists on strike will. Prior has mentioned a figure of £10 per week as the 'deeming' amount. The reason for the proposal is said to be the public's concern that the ISTC, with funds of £11m, has not been paying strike pay. But the ISTC has 95,000 members on strike. That would mean a deeming amount of £950,000 per week. At that rate a strike could only last a month or two at best and the union would be bankrupted before the strike could succeed.

The proposal also ignores the fact that, contrary to what is popularly supposed, many unions are not wealthy. It is an open secret for example that the AUEW could not begin to pay strike pay over any lengthy period of time. Unions on the whole do not have vast funds and often what they do have is tied up in property.

It is this property which will come under attack if the Tories go ahead with the proposal to make unions liable again in damages. At the moment a union cannot be sued for damages caused by industrial action. The Tories are set to change that. So if for instance the ISTC went ahead and picketed the private steel companies in breach of the first customer/first supplier rule, it would be liable to pay a vast sum in damages to each one of those private companies.

Trade unions under these proposals will be forced to fight long wars of attrition. Because they cannot take effective strike action, the strikes against employers will be lengthened and intensified to make them bite. But at the same time their funds will be subject to the needs of strikers and their families and at each step the unions will have to weigh up the risk that any industrial action will bring with it a crippling damages claim.

The Industrial Relations Act of 1971 was an attempt by the last Tory government to bring the whole of industrial relations within a tight legal framework. It involved the creation of a special court, the idea of registered and non-registered unions with the infamous section 96 which meant that non-registered unions (and TUC policy was not to register) lost the right to strike. It was seen rightly by the trade union movement as a weapon to alter the balance of power decisively against the interest of the working class.

This time the approach is more insidious. There is not the heavy hand of the Industrial Relations Court and the cumbersome machinery of the Industrial Relations Act. But no one should be deceived by Prior's 'softly softly' approach. No one should be deceived by the 'rift' in the Cabinet from which Prior is presented as the victor for moderation whose offerings a grateful trade union movement should accept with relief. The method is different but the effect is the same. After all, why bother with special courts and special law when the ordinary courts and the common law will do the job with equal enthusiasm? The one sure prediction is that, once again, it will be breakfast, dinner and tea for the lawyers and nothing short of disaster for everyone else.

Jennie Horne

ACAS wins

The letter and spirit of existing trade union law were upheld again by the House of Lords last week when they overruled Lord Denning on an important case involving trade union recognition. The Law Lords granted an appeal by the Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service (ACAS) against a Court of Appeal ruling made last year. The case involved union recognition at W. H. Allen and Sons of Bedford, an engineering company.

ACAS carried out an investigation and made a report under the terms of the 1975 Employment Protection Act. They recommended that existing bargaining arrangements should continue at the company, and that the non-TUC affiliated union UKAPE (UK Association of Professional Engineers) should not be recognised there.

The Court of Appeal's decision, which declared the report null and void, substantially restricted ACAS's discretion in making recommendations on trade union recognition – a follow-on from the court's findings in the Grunwick case. The report had followed ACAS's making 'such enquiries as it thought fit' – the precise wording of the section of the Act which describes ACAS's powers in recommending recognition.

The 1975 Act gives ACAS wide terms of reference, including a 'general duty of promoting the improvement of industrial relations, and in particular of encouraging the extension of collective bargaining and the development and, where necessary, reform of collective bargaining machinery'.

The report on W. H. Allen advised that recognition of UKAPE would upset the existing machinery, which it said functioned adequately. That view was supported by the Engineering Employers' Federation (to which W. H. Allen is affiliated), by the Confederation of Shipbuilding and Engineering Unions and by employees, all of whom were happy with existing representation of the relevant grades by AUEW (TASS). These groups all thought the introduction of UKAPE into collective bargaining arrangements at the Company would prove disruptive. Moreover existing unions were clearly hostile to UKAPE recognition.

The House of Lords held that ACAS had not exercised its discretion unreasonably, and that therefore its recommendation should stand. It had examined the issue fully before issuing its report. ACAS's success in the House of Lords, like the recent success of the steelworkers in the case brought by private steel companies seeking to restrict secondary industrial action, is likely to prove shortlived. The Tory Government's Employment Bill is committed to restricting the scope of industrial action by trade unions and the extent of their immunities. It also proposes abolition of the recognition provisions in the 1975 Act. ACAS's major role would then become redundant.

Lord Denning and the Cabinet may think they are set fair for a final win against the Lords and the unions. Trade unionists' reactions may make the victory a Pyrrhic one.

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UNITED STATES
Godfrey Hodgson

How America plans to keep intelligence agencies under control

Are you listening, Merlyn Rees?

'ALL GOVERNMENTS have spies,' wrote the *New York Times* in an editorial last week, 'but none are so bound to account to their citizens and respect their liberties' as the government of the US. The remark has the complacent ring of so many other 'only in Americas'. But it also happens to be true.

The mood in Washington is no longer that of the aftermath of Watergate and of the other revelations of cowboy behaviour by the CIA and other intelligence services. Then, Congress and some influential sections of the press were in a mood to throw open the windows and let the daylight into the murkier recesses of the secret world. It is no longer open season on the CIA. There are many Senators and Congressmen for whom the inadequate warning the administration had of the oil price increase, of the Iranian revolution and the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan are fresher memories than CIA involvement in domestic espionage or covert action abroad.

It is in something like this spirit that Senator Moynihan has introduced a bill that would relieve the CIA of certain inhibitions laid on it by congressional action in the past decade. But it is worth noting that not even friends of the intelligence community in Congress believe that the agency should be as free from effective supervision as all but the most radical members of Parliament think our services need to be.

There are in fact three proposed pieces of legislation before Congress. One is the Moynihan bill. The second is a bill drafted by the Senate intelligence committee itself which would provide the CIA (and the other agencies, the chief of which are the Defence Intelligence Agency in the Pentagon and the National Security Agency, responsible for communications interception and electronic intelligence) with a charter of rules. And the third is the administration's slightly different version of the same charter.

The head of the Senate committee's staff told me last week that the consensus between the committee's approach and the administration's covers 99 per cent of the points at issue. He was exaggerating, perhaps; for there are substantial points in dispute. One of them concerns the permission the agency would need before undertaking covert action. The Senate intelligence committee is demanding 'full access' to all files, including *advance* knowledge of covert operations. The administration, on the CIA's behalf, maintains that 'timely notification', after the fact, will suffice. It could make a big difference.

The agency is making other demands: that the number of committees of the Congress that would be informed of secret operations would be reduced from eight at present to two; that the CIA need no longer make operational material available under the Freedom of Information Act; and that there should be penalties laid on anyone who divulged the name of an intelligence agent. These are important immunities, and the CIA is likely to win all or most of them in the course of the debate on its 'charter'.

Hearings on the new legislation began this week. The differences between alternative versions will then be resolved in the two committees (one in the Senate and one in the House). The present intention is to bring the compromise version to the floor for debate and hopefully for a vote in April, though those close to the legislative process are aware that the whole enterprise could be derailed by presidential politics.

It was as long ago as 1967 that *Ramparts* first revealed the scope of the CIA's involvement in domestic penetration and espionage, contrary to the National Security Act of 1947, which in establishing the agency flatly laid it down that it must not operate inside the United States. There followed a long series of revelations exposing both the things the agency was doing that were illegal because they were being done inside the United States, and the things it was doing (like attempting to assassinate Fidel Castro) that were illegal anywhere. In 1975, the Ford administration was constrained by the rising clamour to set up the Rockefeller commission to look into the agency, and in February 1976 President Ford set out the agency's ground rules in an executive order.

Congress moved at the same time. Special committees of inquiry were set up both in the House, under Congressman Otis Pike, and the Senate, under Senator Church. The Pike committee soon succumbed to internal dissension, reinforced by crafty lobbying by Henry Kissinger and others anxious to prevent the probing going too deep.

The Church committee, too, had to do some horse-trading before President Ford and Secretary of State Kissinger would allow it to question vital government witnesses, and insiders contend that the committee as a result failed to get to the bottom of some important matters, notably the degree of US clandestine involvement in the 1973 conspiracy against the Allende government in Chile. However, overall the Church committee was highly effective in dramatising CIA wrongdoing, and it led directly to the establishment of the two powerful permanent 'oversight committees', one each in Senate and House.

In some respects, therefore, the end result of the present effort to put the supervision of the intelligence agencies on a firm constitutional footing may be a disappointment to those who led the drive to make the agencies accountable in the first place. Yet to British eyes, even that disappointing result is more than our politicians think we deserve. The mission and duties of the agencies will be unambiguously defined. The principle of their accountability to the elected legislature will be clearly established. They will have to submit their budgets to scrutiny by the congressional committees. The CIA and its sister agencies will be laid under a statutory duty to keep Congress informed, and to respond to any request for information. Above all, the agencies will be laid under strict injunctions to respect the rights of citizens and to refrain from undertaking clandestine domestic operations.

We should be so lucky.

THIS WEEK

Psychobabble!

David Martin discusses
the linguistic health of the nation in a major
review of 'The State of the Language.'

Also in this week's Times Higher Education Supplement:

* A special survey of the financial plight of British universities.
* Second chance learning: two attempts to meet the need.
* Another historian's view of Official Secrets.
* The future of postgraduate teacher training courses.

THE TIMES
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Every Friday

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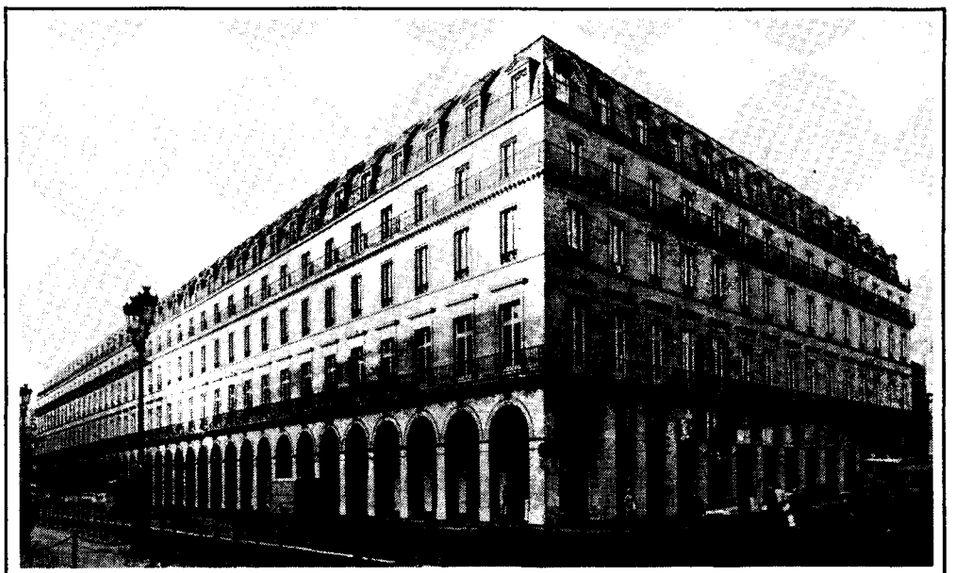
The struggle over £3 billion

The main problem with splitting the Post Office is what to do with its pension fund. CHRISTOPHER HIRD investigates.



Grands Magasins du Louvre, Paris: one of the pension fund's investments which cannot be split. At one time the £40 million property looked like a financial disaster but now the antique market, offices and shops provide the fund with a better return than they can get from owning offices in London.

THE COST OF posting a letter could rise by another 1p and the postal service – shortly to be hived off from its more profitable sister, telecommunications – could start life completely bankrupt if proposals currently under discussion in the Post Office come to fruition. These proposals aim to solve one of the most vexing problems of the plan to split the Post Office into two separate businesses; what to do with the pension fund. With assets of almost £3 billion, the Post Office pension fund is one of the largest and, as the fund itself admits, therefore powerful, financial institutions in the country. When the Post Office is split in two – probably not until 1981 – a decision has to be made about what to do with the pension fund's assets – shares, property and loans to the government – and how to share out its liabilities – the promises to pay pensions. This is far from being an easy or uncontroversial matter. The form the solution takes will have a significant impact on the future financial performance of the two businesses and, therefore, on their ability to pay higher wages and improved pension benefits. The intimate connection between the finances of the Post Office and its pension scheme is thrown into sharp relief by the contents of the Post Office's own internal memorandum on what should be done. This shows beyond reasonable doubt that a major motivation of the Post Office management is that of keeping the government's hands off its considerable profits.

One of the major problems with the Post Office pension fund is the future status of a £1.25 billion debt which the Post Office, as employer, has to pay to the fund. This deficit is the result of the hopelessly unrealistic way the Post Office was set up in 1969, when it ceased to be a government department.

AS CIVIL SERVANTS, Post Office workers were guaranteed an inflation-proofed pension. And, as in other civil service departments, it was a non-contributory pension scheme and the pensions were on the pay-as-you-go principle: each year the Post Office paid some money to the Treasury, who paid the pensioners. In the private sector, including the nationalised industries, pensions are funded as follows: each year employers and, if it is a contributory scheme, employees, pay into a fund (invested in shares, property and fixed interest investments) which is large enough to provide all the pension benefits already promised. The practical advantage of this system, when the state provides inadequate pensions, is that a worker's pension is secured independently of the financial health of his employer. From capitalism's point of view, funds have the attraction of concentrating contributors' minds on the costs of their own particular pension and of channelling large sums of money into the hands of the private financial sector.

It was, therefore, automatically assumed that the Post Office, as a new independent corporation, would have a pension fund. The Labour government seemed insufficiently aware of the implications of this, and there is no evidence of any battle over the principle of introducing a funded scheme. Having made this decision, the government had to make sure that the pension fund had enough money to meet the existing obligations that would be taken over by the Post Office. Rather than give the fund a cash lump sum, the government decided that the fund would inherit a 'notional' fund, consisting of one of the government's own stocks – 2½ per cent Consols. This was to be paid to the pension fund in quarterly instalments of £11.25 million.

From the Post Office's point of view this was a disastrous idea. It meant that the pension fund, whose liabilities were rising with inflation, had a large proportion of its assets 'invested' in a stock whose value fell and which it could not in any case sell and reinvest. The pension fund's deficit – the shortfall between the value of the assets and the ultimate liabilities for the promises made before 1969 – rose inexorably. In addition, the comparatively generous benefits of the pension fund – complete inflation-proofing of a pension equivalent to half of final salary for someone who had spent their life in the Post Office, as well as a large lump sum – meant that the fund was also building up a deficit for the years since 1969: for most of the Seventies it was not possible for institutional investors to get a return on their money higher than the rate of inflation. The Post Office's account for 1977/78 revealed a total deficit on the pension fund of £1,920 million, which the Post Office was paying off over 20 years.

The pension fund imposed a serious burden on the Post Office. In 1977/78 the Post Office paid a total – including deficiency payments – of £314 million into the pension fund (18 per cent of the wage bill) compared with profits of £368 million. Attempts to persuade the government to take over responsibility failed, and during 1978 a compromise solution was devised – which is now causing problems.

IN NOVEMBER 1978 the Post Office and the pension fund signed a Deed of Covenant, which was designed to eliminate the pre-1969 deficiency, by then valued at £1.25 billion. The Post Office took responsbility for this by converting part of its reserves (accumulated profits) into a long term debt to the pension fund. Each year it pays interest on this to the pension fund, expunging the debt by 1986. The problem with this arrangement – unforeseen at the time – was that the write-down in reserves was carried out within the telecommunications business: because of its low profitability, the postal side had hardly any reserves. There were several reasons for this decision, as well as the obvious capacity of telecommunications (with reserves of over £2.5 billion) to pay. Of particular interest are two of these reasons – spelt out in the paper prepared by the Post Office Central Finance Department for the Joint Reorganisation Committee – the management/union committee which is looking at all aspects of the split in the Post Office. First, it made it easier for the Post Office to meet the financial targets set by the government. Telecomms had a profit target set in terms of profit *before* interest; posts had a target set in terms of profit *after* interest. By turning the pension deficiency contribution into a £133 million interest payment charged to telecomms, these targets were easier to reach'. Second, as the JRC paper says:

> The assets of the telecommunications business were growing rapidly and as the reserves of the nationalised industries are in fact government reserves, there was always a possibility of the government converting part of those reserves to public dividend capital.

The objection from the Post Office's point of view to public dividend capital is that it bears dividends, instead of leaving the profits in the hands of the corporation. However, the result of this move is that the new telecommunications business – to be called British Telecommunications – will be saddled with a massive debt and an annual drain on its finances, part of which will be paying for the pensions of employees in the postal business.

Solving the problem is not easy. The

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reserves of the postal business – which will keep the title Post Office – are currently only £220 million; taking over half the liability to the pension fund would make the Post Office bankrupt to the tune of £405 million. This would not be the case, the JRC paper remarks, if the Post Office used Current Cost Accounting procedures – i.e. if its properties were included at their current market value. However, this would not reduce the cost of the interest payments, and these – if divided on a 50/50 basis – would put an extra 1p on the letter rate.

THE JRC PAPER, outlining the ways in which the pension fund might be treated when the Post Office is split, was circulated by the director of the JRC, Mr David Savill, last December. He asked for views to be made known by 12 February but the unions – through the Council of Post Office Unions – felt that this was too short a deadline for such a complex issue. As a result, the matter is still under discussion and the unions as a group have not formulated a response, though the Union of Post Office Workers – which has strongly opposed the split – is also against any division of the fund.

The JRC paper outlines three main options for the fund: maintaining a central fund as at the moment; maintaining a central investment fund in which two quite separate contribution/benefit funds could invest and, finally, creating two completely separate funds. In the view of several people who have read it, the paper leans heavily in the direction of the last option, perhaps reflecting the views of many senior telecomms managers, from whose ranks Mr Savill comes. Indeed, the question of whether the pension fund should *not* be split is barely considered.

In any fund there is a large element of cross-subsidy. Everyone pays the same percentage of their wage in contributions, but not everyone receives the same proportionate benefit: some contributors may die before retirement, leaving no dependents; others may change jobs before they have earned any significant pension entitlement. All these differing claims are pooled in one fund, but within any large labour force there are groups who are more or less likely to make a claim. For example, postal workers may be older and longer-serving (on average) than telecomms employees, and therefore likely to take more than their proportionate share of pension benefits. The unions are now waiting for a detailed profile of the two workforces so that such differences can be measured. So far, preliminary work by the fund is believed to suggest very little difference between the two workforces. But this may change as more information is accumulated.

The first option proposed in the Savill memo does indeed suggest that a maintained centralised fund be split internally: individual investments would not be allowed to the Post Office and Britel, although

> it would be necessary on the basis of actuarial advice, to make a division of the total value of the assets between the two corporations. Investment income accruing between one actuarial valuation and the next would then be apportioned on the basis of asset valuation at the beginning of the period and the net contribution from each corporation. At each valuation the actuary would assess future contribution rates (normal and deficiency) separately for each corporation.

In other words, postal workers will in future pay for postal workers' pensions and Britel workers for Britel pensions. It is worth noting that between 1948 and 1972, BOAC and BEA – two separate airline businesses – shared a pension fund in which there was complete pooling. This meant that the employees of both concerns – and their employers – paid in exactly the same and received exactly the same benefits.

It is because 'there could be no certainty that the benefits and funding arrangements of the two corporations would be identical in perpetuity', that the Savill memo suggests an end to complete pooling. This – the most important assumption of the memo – is developed when possible objections to Option 1 are discussed.

THE INITIAL share-out of assets would, the memo says, give telecomms about £1.5 billion, compared with £1.2 billion for posts. But the 'forecast growth rates for the two corporations indicate that the disparity will progressively increase'. In addition, it is expected that telecomm contributions will substantially exceed pension payments 'but this may not always be the case for the Post Office.' On the face of it these developments are not both inevitable: although telecomms is expected to grow more quickly than posts, the latter is labour intensive and the former capital intensive. Growth patterns in the business may not be reflected in the workforce. The Post Office explains that telecomm wages are expected to rise faster than those in posts and that, in thirty years, posts are expected to be a much smaller employer.

Difficulties are foreseen over representation on the board of trustees: a growing telecomm share of assets may increase the calls for more representation. It is also thought that differing cash flows may cause conflict over the best form of investment: funds with a big outflow of benefits may want a higher current yield than a fund with a net inflow, which wants long term capital growth. The memo sees further difficulties if funding arrangements and benefits differ significantly between the two businesses (for example, if one increases benefits substantially or wants to pay off its share of any deficit in a different manner).

In fact, none of these is a real objection. A pension fund would have no difficulty in coping with differing contributions, differing benefits, or differing balances between the two. It is quite large enough to get the correct balance of investments to meet liabilities. This, after all, is what insurance companies are doing all the time and the memo's own discussion of the actuarial division of the fund implicitly accepts that this problem can be coped with. Nor does the question of trustees seem relevant: at the moment representation is by union, not per head of membership; and the UPW, with half of the fund members, has only one trustee.

The problems are not, therefore, practical so much as political. Looking at the future, it is the Britel management which is more likely to be in charge of a highly profitable concern with an improved pension scheme, and supervising a massive inflow of money to a pension fund which may become extremely strong, depending on the age, length of service and sex of its labour force. The last thing it wants is to get bogged down in arguments with a postal business which is completely different in character. The telecomms management harbours an overwhelming desire to expunge the Post Office connection from its business dealings.

THE SECOND OPTION discussed involves the pension fund continuing effectively as an investment trust: the trustees of the two separate funds would decide how much they wanted to put into equities, fixed interest, property and so on. The major objection to this is that it leaves the trustees of the fund little room for manoeuvre in their investment policies.

The third option is a complete separation of the two funds. This section takes up seven pages, compared with the three devoted to the other two options, and even attempts to answer the possible objections: a service not rendered in the discussion of the previous two options.

Merits attributed to Option 3 are: the ability of each fund to act independently; the necessity to deal with only one board; and easier decision-making. It is also claimed that a smaller organisation would find it easier to locate profitable investments, though it is far from clear that £1.5 billion is small enough, or that small funds are always sure to get the better deals.

The major objections concern the costs of the initial split of the investment portfolio, and of recruiting and employing staffs to run the funds. These objections are quickly dispatched: the Post Office solicitor says the costs of sharing out the investments would not be great; £2.4 billion of the total £2.7 billion assets are easily transferable and the properties could be held jointly or allotted in lieu of shares. Setting up a new management team would take time, but could be done. The memo claims that administration costs of £2.7 million are small 'in relation to an operation handling assets of £2.7 billion and serving 400,000 staff and 170,000 pensioners'. However, the Post Office was not able to assure me that this statement was the result of a study of the costs of other pension schemes; I was merely told that it was satisfied that the fund was run economically, and this was not the major issue anyway.

The memo then moves on to discussion of the £1.5 billion pre-1969 deficit. From the point of view of the two new funds – to whom this represents a major asset – it seems that it would be sensible to split the asset equally, otherwise one of the funds would end up with over half its assets invested in the Post Office: the memo says, 'the trustees would almost certainly be very reluctant to have such a large proportion of their total portfolio and tied up in a single "fixed interest" asset':

> There is, therefore, a prima facie case for dividing the asset between the funds even if the liability is allocated wholly to Telecom. This would involve Telecom making payments to the Pension Fund of the new-style Post Office which to the man in the street might look like a subsidy from one corporation to the other. In fact, if subsidy is the right word, it would be a subsidy from Telecom to the Government who properly should be bearing the liability, but the public relations angle could give problems.

From which it seems fair to conclude that the Britel management would put up with paying £67 million a year to the Post Office's pension fund if that were the price they had to pay for complete independence.

[1]See 'Tough Targets for Post Office and Coal', NS 28 July 1978

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BROADCASTING
Jonathan Coe

Parliament has a chance to democratise local radio

Finding the right wavelength

THE BROADCASTING BILL, which had its second reading on Monday and is due to enter its committee stage next month, is widely thought of as being solely concerned with television. Yet it is with commercial radio that the Bill could have its most dramatic impact. If one section of the Bill were amended, it could become easier for local communities to have a say in who owns commercial radio stations and what kind of programmes they transmit. The same amendments could also put an end to the closed and secretive activities of the Independent Broadcasting Authority (IBA), an organisation which at present wields enormous power subject to very few public controls.

At the moment Britain has 19 commercial stations. By 2001, when the IBA's statutory life expires, there could be at least 60 under control of the IBA. All the stations now transmitting are run by straight commercial companies, some of them making huge profits (£3 million on a turnover of £8 million is the largest). Six or seven franchises are due to be advertised this year.

Few 'non-commercial' applications for franchises have been made; even fewer succeed. The best known success is that of Cardiff Broadcasting, the community group which won the city's franchise last year and is due to go on the air this year; one of the most revealing failures must be that of Aberdeen Radio for the Community. In just three months this latter group managed to put together an application from organisations representing a cross-section of trade union, welfare, political and community interests. Its franchise application was one of the most carefully worked out ever submitted by a non-commercial group, but it was rejected by the IBA at the preliminary round.

In principle, any group of interested people can apply for a franchise. The IBA will send them a document asking for specific information about programming, finance and engineering. This document – worked out by IBA officers without any public consultation – includes the general sentence that contractors are expected to 'combine popular programming with fostering a greater awareness of local affairs and involvement in the community.' Companies then go into a huddle, form consortia and apply. They are under no obligation to hold public meetings or make any kind of approach to their prospective listeners. Once the closing date has passed the IBA calls a public meeting, usually after a first interview with the applicants.

The declared purpose of these meetings is that they help the IBA gain an idea of 'what the public wants', but in fact they are about the most primitive form of public consultation that could be devised. There is only one of these meetings before each contract award; it is usually poorly publicised; and it normally lasts for under two hours. The IBA often packs the meetings with specially invited representatives of church and welfare organisations, so that in the case of a meeting held in Coventry last February only fifty seats were available to uninvited members of the public. No one at the meeting is given any information about who the prospective contractors are and no programme plans or applications are published. There is no agenda, there are no voting rights, indeed there is no formal procedure of any kind. Norman Easton, who was involved in the Aberdeen application, wrote about their public meeting: 'Chairperson Mary Warnock was particularly irate. Asked by a member of the public for information about the different companies, she said: "We're not here to give you information, you're here to give us information." '

At last year's Coventry meeting the IBA was asked specific questions about the contracts procedure. It fell to the Authority member Tony Pursell (Managing Director of Arthur Guinness) to reply:

> Er. . .Ladies and Gentlemen, the chairman's asked me to start on this lot, which I think is a little bit difficult, but still. . .um. . .First of all, when Coventry Broadcasting whatever it's going to be called comes into action, it'll be your station, if you don't listen to it, it'll be dead. So this is the first point I think we ought to make. In this sense I think you've got to vote with your feet, or with your ears. But. . .you asked some specific points. We have set up an LAC (Local Advisory Committee) on which, I don't know how we find that membership, but it happens, and that meets from time to time and. . .um. . .er. . . but we are asked also to create these meetings such as this in order to hear you, who aren't, who can't obviously be members of the LAC in this sort of number. (Cries of 'Why not?') Well you can't all be on it, two or three hundred people, but no doubt, you know, you can be chosen, and this is, I think, one of the difficulties we have; that we have to choose a, between these five (contractors), secondly we have to produce a programme that is going to be listened to, thirdly I think we have to listen to the very good points that many of you have made tonight so that we can not only broadcast for the majority but also broadcast for different minority groups, because we've had somebody saying here, we'd like this, and someone here saying we'd like that. Well, we've got to try and answer all of these points, so that you cannot answer the questions that you've put on positively yes or no positions.

When the IBA get really rattled they say that public meetings are not representative in any case. The chairman of the Coventry meeting, Professor James Ring, told everyone there: 'You're not representative, as I'm sure you'll agree, because you've turned out tonight. You're willing to give of your time to come and make your comments known. Most people aren't, you see.' (His strictures on the public could apply equally to himself.)

Only when the contract has been awarded does the IBA publish any documents, and even then it releases only the programmes section of the original franchise. It does not give reasons for its decisions.

IF THE PROCEDURE for 'public meetings' looks dubious, it is as nothing compared to the method of reviewing the three-year 'rolling contracts'. In the first instance the IBA awards a contract for three years – say, 1974, 1975 and 1976. Each year the Authority reviews the performance of the contractor: so, in our example, if the IBA were satisfied with performance at the end of 1974, it would roll the contract along to cover the three years 1975-77. This means that the contract never ends, and the contractor is never in serious jeopardy because it always has at least two years to run on a contract, and the contract is never open to competition.

The contract review is carried out in complete secrecy: not even the programme contractors are allowed to see copies of the IBA's review documents. The IBA refuses to publish the criteria it uses to assess performance (indeed one wonders whether any written criteria exist).

The IBA claims to treat the views of the Local Advisory Committees as being of great importance. But these bodies are in no way representative of the public – nor are they accountable to it. The committees' terms of reference are set by the IBA. The members are chosen solely by the IBA, and the committees meet only four times a year – on IBA premises, with IBA officers present. The meetings are always held in secret; the IBA keeps the minutes confidential. Reporters are not allowed to attend these meetings, even for background briefing purposes.

Section 23 of the new Broadcasting Bill attempts to define the IBA's radio contract procedure and introduce a degree of public discussion into the process. But the section suffers from vague drafting: the IBA's head of information, John Guinery, has already said that there is nothing in the Bill which would require the Authority to change its existing procedures.

The new Bill makes a remarkable contrast to the legislation governing the activities of comparable government agencies, such as the Civil Aviation Authority. Both the IBA and the CAA are regulatory agencies, at arm's length from the government, and both have the power to award contracts or licences to competing applicants. Both Authorities are also in the business of parcelling up public assets (in both cases air space) for commercial administration. To carry out this function the CAA arranges hearings under the auspices of the Council on Tribunals. These hearings must be in public, and the Authority's official record discloses applications for licences, licensing practices, notice of hearings and the decisions themselves. The CAA provides reasons for its decisions, and is under statutory obligation to provide information to journalists.

Section 23 of the new Bill would need to be amended to bring about a similar hearings procedure for the IBA. The Home Office would also have to prepare a simple document of statutory instruments to lay down the rules for the tribunals. This is the opportunity facing MPs during the committee stages of the Broadcasting Bill; if the opportunity is taken there will, at last, be a chance of establishing democratic control over local radio stations and over the institution that supervises them.

Further reading: The most useful information on the IBA's contracts procedure is contained in the Tenth Report from the Select Committee on Nationalised Industries, particularly the evidence from the Local Radio Workshop and the Community Communications Group; also of interest are the Observations of the Home Office and the IBA on that report. Further details may be obtained from Local Radio Workshop, 12 Praed Mews, London W2; and details of the Community Communications Group can be had from Broadcasting Rights and Information Project, 92 Huddleston Road, London N7.

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WEALTH
Chris Pond

Britain's taxes on unearned income are likely to remain favourable to a few

The unsuccessful highway robber

NEXT MONTH'S budget is expected to include substantial reductions in taxes on capital and wealth, increasing wealth inequalities, which are already extreme. But the Chancellor argues that they are necessary because the current system is 'oppressive' and 'harmful'. An analysis of capital taxes in Britain published tomorrow suggests that this view is more firmly grounded in myth than reality.[1]

The three main forms of wealth tax in Britain are the Capital Transfer Tax (CTT), Capital Gains Tax and the Investment Income Surcharge. CTT has its roots in the old Estate Duty, introduced by Harcourt in 1894. Harcourt's tax had a top rate of 8 per cent on estates of over £1 m, sufficient, in the view of one indignant MP, to 'throw into shade everything that had ever been done in the way of highway robbery'. The next 80 years saw an almost ten-fold increase in the top rate of tax, which (as CTT) now stands at 75 per cent on estates of over £2m.

With such a dramatic increase in the nominal rates of tax, we might have expected these inheritance taxes to have had a powerful redistributive effect. After all, as Harbury and Hitchens pointed out in the NEW STATESMAN last week, 'inheritance is the major determinant of wealth inequality'. But recent estimates suggest that the redistribution which has occurred in recent decades has been within the ranks of the top 20 per cent of wealth-holders.[2]

Part of the reason, no doubt, is that Estate Duty had become very much a 'voluntary tax', easily avoided or evaded. Whereas the tax contributed more than a third of direct tax revenue when it was introduced, and played an important part in financing the beginnings of the welfare state, its revenue had fallen to less than 2½ per cent of direct taxes by the time it was replaced by CTT in 1974. This is a much greater fall than one would expect from changes in the distribution of wealth and the larger share of GNP accounted for by the state and by wages over the period. Although CTT was intended to close many of the loopholes (in particular that of gifts before death) it also provided generous exemptions, and the revenue continued to fall. By 1978/79, CTT was itself contributing only 1½ per cent of all direct taxes. Indeed, last year it raised less *in cash terms* than was the case with the old Estate Duty ten years earlier (£369m compared with £383m). By contrast, income tax receipts had increased four-fold over the same period, an increase of £14¼ billion.

The explanation of CTT's poor revenue yield is to be found not only in continued avoidance but in the substantial exemptions provided. No tax is payable on estates of less than £25,000 – a considerably higher exemption (in real terms) than in 1894. (There are suggestions the level will be increased to £30,000 in the budget.) As a result, in 1977/78 estates valued at over £2m were paying only £1m in tax, even though the nominal rate on such estates was 75 per cent. As a result CTT has little impact on inequalities of inherited wealth. In 1977/78, revenue from the tax represented less than a fifth of one per cent (0.19 per cent) of total estimated personal net wealth. It is difficult to recognise CTT in the Chancellor's description of the tax as 'oppressive, harmful to business and a real deterrent to initiative and enterprise'.

THE CONSERVATIVES have also placed on record their desire to see an end to the Investment Income Surcharge (IIS). Most countries tax earnings more favourably than income from investments, in recognition of the fact that the latter does not involve the loss of leisure and does not decline with age. A dozen OECD countries achieve this with annual wealth taxes. In Britain, a surcharge (the IIS) of 15 per cent on top of normal income tax rates is applied to investment incomes. The surcharge applies only to taxable investment incomes – that is, incomes after allowances and reliefs of over £5,000. Even at current high rates of interest, an individual would need a capital sum of between £30,000 and £35,000 to yield that sort of income (or a share portfolio worth over £80,000). Largely as a result of the concessions allowed by this Government, and its predecessor, the number of people subject to the surcharge had fallen to just 300,000 by last year – a third as many as in 1976/77.

Moreover, even with the IIS, income from earnings is often *more heavily* taxed than that from investments, especially at the lower levels. Earnings are subject not only to income tax, but also to national insurance contributions – from which investments are exempt. The majority of wage-earners therefore face a higher rate of tax than investors with the same level of income.

IIS is as inefficient as it is inequitable. By definition, only wealth that yields income is subject to the tax. The wealthy are therefore encouraged to divert their resources into non-income yielding assets (such as yachts, cars and houses). A well-to-do young man, calculating the difference between investing £15,000 in a new Porsche or putting the money into fixed interest investments yielding an interest rate of say 15 per cent, would find himself only £560 a year worse off if he bought the car. This is obviously highly inefficient. But the Conservatives seem likely to abolish the surcharge, rather than to make it more effective.

THE FINAL main form of wealth tax in Britain is the Capital Gains Tax (CGT) described by Sir Geoffrey as a 'capricious and sometimes savage levy'. The major criticism of CGT is that it is often applied to mere 'paper gains' which result from inflation. This is unsatisfactory and should be amended, but the extent of the problem should not be over-emphasised. The tax raised only £350 millions last year which, like CTT, represents only 1½p in the £ of all direct tax revenue. Far from being converted by inflation into a savage wealth tax, CGT has not even managed to maintain its revenue in *cash terms* since 1974/75. In real terms, its revenue has halved.

Although the income from capital gains enhances an individual's standard of living and command over economic resources just the same as other forms of income, such gains are much more favourably taxed. Instead of being subject to the progressive schedule of income tax rates, the normal rate of CGT is 30 per cent. Moreover, capital gains of between £1,000 and £5,000 are subject to a rate of only 15 per cent. So a person earning £5,000 a year would pay 29 per cent of it in income tax and national insurance contributions. But if he received that amount in capital gains instead, his tax bill would be halved (to 12 per cent).

Because capital gains are so favourably treated there is again enormous incentive for the wealthy to convert their income into this form (and reduce their tax rate from a maximum of 75 per cent to 30 per cent). Capital gains have become not so much a subject of taxation as a means of avoiding it. This has been actively encouraged by governments. At present it is possible, for instance, to buy two types of Treasury Stock 1982. One yields an interest rate of 14 per cent, the other 3 per cent. Only a fool or a rich man (who was subject to the higher rates of income tax and IIS) would buy the latter. His investment income (taxable at up to 75 per cent) would be low, because of the paltry interest rate. But he might expect a good capital gain on reselling the Stock, and, because of the favourable treatment of gilt-edged stocks, this gain will be tax-free, so long as it is not realised in less than a year. As a result of such transactions, few of the well-advised need pay the higher rates of income tax, and only two per cent of the taxpaying population now does so. The impact of CGT is perhaps greater in widening inequalities in income (through its effect on the income tax system) than in reducing inequalities in wealth. If the Conservatives abolish the tax altogether, the progressiveness of income tax will be further reduced.

MOST OECD countries tax wealth-holders more heavily than Britain, and a dozen have a separate wealth tax. There is certainly a place for an annual wealth tax here, although it would need to be more progressive than that considered – but subsequently abandoned – by the last Labour government. We also need an effective system of inheritance taxes, perhaps along the lines of the combined annual wealth and accessions tax (paid by the recipient instead of, as at present, the donor) as proposed by the Meade Committee. Capital gains should be taxed in the same way as other unearned income subject to the same progressive schedule of rates. The last Labour government had a commitment to reduce wealth inequalities and to 'a wealth tax on the rich'. The wealth tax was never introduced, inequalities in wealth increased and capital taxes were effectively halved during their period of office. As a result, such taxes now contribute between them little more than 4½p in the £ collected by the Inland Revenue.

1. C. Pond, L. Burghes, B. Smith: *Taxing Wealth Inequalities*, Fabian Tract 466, 65p.
2. A. B. Atkinson and A. J. Harrison: *Distribution of Personal Wealth in Britain*, CUP, 1978.

NEW STATESMAN INDEX

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IRELAND
Mary Holland

'We must face the fact that Northern Ireland as a political entity has failed'

Mr Haughey's harder line

CHARLES HAUGHEY'S speech – his first as Irish premier – to the annual conference of his Fianna Fail party last weekend has been dismissed as containing nothing new or useful on the troubled subject of Northern Ireland. 'Verbal republicanism' was the general – fashionable – comment of those looking down from the press box at the Royal Dublin Society's main hall, as the party faithful interrupted the speech to applaud every mention of Irish nationality, unity and an end to the British presence.

Such dismissive reaction is inadequate. It is true that the Irish premier's speech contained no dramatic revelations, particularly if one expected, as some British observers seem to have done, that Mr Haughey was about to announce that he had recalled the Irish troops from their peacekeeping duties in the Middle East and was about to redeploy them in Crossmaglen. But what Mr Haughey did do was to restate the fundamental nature of the Northern problem, as perceived from Dublin, in a more stark and uncompromising fashion than has been the wont of his predecessor, Jack Lynch, in recent years. He identified the actual existence of Northern Ireland as the cause of the violence and instability over 60 years: 'The very entity itself is artificial and has been artificially sustained. In these conditions violence and repression were inevitable.' He continued by saying that though he wished the present constitutional talks in Belfast well, they could not provide a lasting solution. 'We must face the fact that Northern Ireland as a political entity has failed and that a new beginning is needed. The time has surely come for the two sovereign governments to work together to find a formula.'

Strictly speaking all this is in accordance not only with Fianna Fail's policy, but with that of every substantial political party in the South. But Mr Haughey's pressing demand that a new initiative be taken by the British and Irish governments together, and his announcement that he intends to back this demand by making Northern Ireland a top priority in discussions with other heads of government in the EEC, represent a considerable shift in emphasis from the much more passive line pursued by Mr Lynch and previous Irish governments. So does his statement that the present constitutional talks, while they may ameliorate the situation in the North, cannot be accepted as a lasting solution. This view is much closer to that of his young back bencher, Ms Sile De Valera, whose speech last year, rejecting all interim solutions in Northern Ireland, signalled the beginning of the upsurge of Republican sentiment within Fianna Fail which led to Mr Lynch's downfall and swept Mr Haughey, against the odds, to power.

This is not to say that Mr Haughey's speech should be unwelcome to Britain. He is said to have worked extremely hard on it – particularly the section on Northern Ireland – and it deserves more careful study than the automatic reflex reactions it has already received both from Northern Unionists and from Mr Humphrey Atkins. Certain of Mr Haughey's emphases should appeal to Mrs Thatcher. He underlined the appalling damage which has been done to the Northern Irish economy by a decade of violence, the continuing cost to both countries, the poisoning effect on Anglo-Irish relations. On security he made it quite clear that there would be no tolerance of the IRA, but also delicately reminded Westminster that the Irish government's inflated spending on security, directly attributable to the North, was becoming increasingly onerous at a time of economic difficulties.

If there was one strand missing from Mr Haughey's speech, and it was a gross omission, it was any concrete indication of how he sees Northern Ireland's million Protestants taking part in this grand design for Ireland's future. True, he paid fulsome tribute to their qualities and promised personally to guarantee their rights, but given his past record this is unlikely to carry much weight in Belfast. Whatever Mr Haughey says, the problem is not one which can be solved alone by two sovereign governments in Dublin and London. It never has been. The Northern Protestants *are* the problem. If Mr Haughey can convince them of his good intentions for their future then Britain, one imagines, will be only too ready to wish them and him both 'Godspeed.' But it is a huge 'if' and one which Mr Haughey virtually ignored when talking to his own party last Saturday night.

Still, Mrs Thatcher should not reject the Irish premier's advances with the shrieks of 'impertinence' which have greeted 'Tip' O'Neill and other US politicians in the past. Mr Haughey's speech contained much with which British politicians who have dealt with Ulster would almost certainly agree – the financial situation in the province is desperate and the social cost may well be irreversible. Added to this must be one hard practical question: if the present round of constitutional talks doesn't yield anything acceptable, what will Britain do next? Beset by other troubles, Mrs Thatcher might be glad to look, cautiously, to Mr Haughey for help.

THE MEDIA
Anna Coote

Funds for local papers and new national daily in plans for press reform

Can the TUC set the 'harlot' free?

A NATIONAL DAILY newspaper for the labour movement is one of the more ambitious proposals of the Campaign for Press Freedom – now six months old and accumulating wide support among trade unionists. Some £20 million would be needed and the TUC is suggested as a possible source of funds. The idea will be up for discussion next Thursday, 28 February, when the Campaign holds its first public meeting* since it was launched at the TU Congress last September.

Of the 60-odd prominent individuals who sponsor the Campaign, those known to favour a new national daily include Bill Keys, General Secretary of SOGAT and Geoffrey Goodman, Industrial Editor of the *Daily Mirror*. But there are plenty of sceptics as well. The Campaign's own literature points to the 'widespread prejudice among readers that only owners with an interest in profit can produce an honest newspaper':

> How far are sales of the *Morning Star, Socialist Worker* and *Labour Weekly* compressed because readers, to a certain extent fairly, cannot believe they are anything other than the mouthpieces of their respective parties?

*7 pm, Central Hall, Westminster. Main speaker Tony Benn MP.

Few people on the Left need convincing that the British press is neither free nor diverse. A new 'house journal' for the trade unions would increase diversity, but would be no freer than its right-wing competitors. As the Campaign document says:

> Whatever the formal arrangement of power, there can be little doubt that the biggest cash sponsors would exercise the greatest power.

The Campaign is keen to encourage alternatives 'of all kinds' to the established press, and suggests other strategies which may prove more viable in the end. For example, it would be possible to launch half a dozen provincial newspapers with the cash needed for one national daily – and this would allow a wider range of political approaches and organisational experiments. Local appeals might bring in more cash if people were confident that the newspaper they were subsidising was subject to a degree of local control.

One nascent publication, the *East End News*, has been formally adopted by the Campaign as a pilot project. A group of East London journalists, trade unionists and local residents are trying to raise £25,000 to launch a progressive, community-based weekly newspaper. They are organised as a consumers' co-operative, open to anyone who supports their stated aims and can afford a £5 share. The share entitles them to attend monthly policy meetings and elect a management committee. They hope to learn from the unhappy lesson of the *Hull News*, which folded late last year after only two editions, largely because the local trades council risked launching it with only £2,000 in the kitty, and relied too heavily on advertisers, who refused to buy space on political grounds.

The *East End News* has raised about £7,000 so far, but won't go into production until its full target is reached. It is looking to the unions for most of the funds and even boasts, in its special introductory edition, the official support of Len Murray and the TUC.

One idea mooted by the Campaign for Press Freedom is to set up a launch fund to help new publications of this kind. (This was also proposed by David Basnett of the General and Municipal Workers' Union and Geoffrey Goodman of the *Mirror* in their minority report from the Royal Commission on the Press.) The Campaign calls for an Open Press Authority, financed by a levy on all media advertising and accountable to Parliament, with a quango-style line-up of representatives

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from the major political parties, the unions, newspaper proprietors and a 'reformed Press Council'. As well as administering a launch fund, the OPA would provide production grants to newspapers with small circulations, and set up a National Printing Corporation to provide printing capacity on a contract basis, competing with the private sector and making 'full use of new technology' (It is not clear what arrangements would be made with the print unions to allow this to happen.)

The prospect of state intervention in newspaper publishing may be no less alarming than the continuing monopoly of a few press barons and oil tycoons. Of course, the government is already up to its neck in mass communications – and although the BBC news is not noticeably more biased than its private sector competitors, it is remarkably adept at presenting established men of influence as founts of 'objective truth'. (Greg Philo and John Eldridge provided extensive evidence of this in the NEW STATESMAN, 6 April 1979.) So how can independence from state control be ensured?

One suggestion is that subsidies should be available automatically to any newspaper which met a very closely defined set of practical conditions (about size of circulation, number of competitors and so forth); no judgment would be needed about editorial content, beyond deciding whether a publication had enough column inches to qualify as a newspaper. An encouraging example comes from Sweden. There, the government has intervened to encourage press diversity; early fears of censorship have given way to all-party support and the venture is considered a genuine success.

JUSTICE
George Cunningham

An everyday story of stipendiary magistrates and black youths

The balance of suspicion

MAJOR GEOFFREY Lindsay James Noel, the stipendiary magistrate at Wells Street Court in Westminster, did not take long to reach his verdict on a young West Indian charged with 'being a suspected person and loitering with intent to commit an arrestable offence'. 'I find you guilty. You will pay a fine of £100 and costs of £75.'

That was on 27 November last year. Seven weeks later the defendant was back in court, appealing against the conviction before a proper judge and two lay magistrates in Knightsbridge Crown Court. The police evidence was rigorously cross-examined over several hours. After only a short retirement the bench allowed the appeal and awarded costs for the defendant out of public funds.

So far as the evidence in the police notebooks was concerned, this was a straightforward case. Three police constables were on duty in plain clothes looking out for pickpockets and bagsnatchers in Chapel Market, Islington, on the Saturday before Christmas 1978. All three wrote in their books that in Woolworth's they saw Mr Richards (name changed in this article) reach out his hand towards a purse in a woman's shopping bag. When the woman turned round Mr Richards pulled his hand back and moved off. He walked along the street-market outside the store and made a similar abortive attempt at another woman's purse. He was apprehended a short distance away, taken to the police station at King's Cross Road and charged.

Clerkenwell Magistrates' Court remanded the case to let the defendant apply for legal aid. At a second hearing a month later the court decided it did not have time to hear all the evidence and the case was transferred to the Wells Street Court, which deals with longer hearings. On 11 April and 18 July the case was part heard at Wells St. Another full day was needed and the first date that could be offered was 27 November. The defence counsel who appeared on 11 April was not available on 18 July, and the counsel who did appear had been briefed only the day before the hearing. At one of the hearings one of the police constables was sick and unable to attend. The prosecution decided to proceed without her, thus depriving the defence of a chance to cross-examine – a process that gravely weakened the value of her evidence when it took place later in the Crown Court.

By 27 November the case had been dragging on for eleven months. Defence counsel did his poor best to question whether a thief could really expect to extract a purse from the tight neck of a string bag but was met with confident assurances that the attempt had been made. The defendant had a character witness who, as soon as he opened his mouth, was told by the magistrate to take his hand out of his pocket. The magistrate seemed to entertain no doubt that Mr Richards had been acting suspiciously, that he had been loitering and that the motivation of his mind was to commit a serious offence, all points on which the magistrate needed to be convinced beyond reasonable doubt before he could convict.

AS IT WAS later uncovered at the Crown Court, however, the story was one on which no judge and no jury would have convicted, and on which no public prosecutor (if we had such a thing) would have proceeded.

One police officer said that during the Woolworth's incident all three officers were standing near each other. Another, not having heard the first's evidence, said two were standing together and the other was 20 yards away on the other side of the defendant. About the other incident, one officer said he was on the opposite side of the street from the defendant while his colleague (again unaware of the discrepancy) said the two of them were together near the same stall as the defendant.

Neither of the women who were alleged to have been the target of the attempts was produced or identified at any of the hearings. Although neither was supposed to have been aware of the attempts, it was surely odd that one of the three officers was not detached to get the name even of the second woman while the two others went after the suspect.

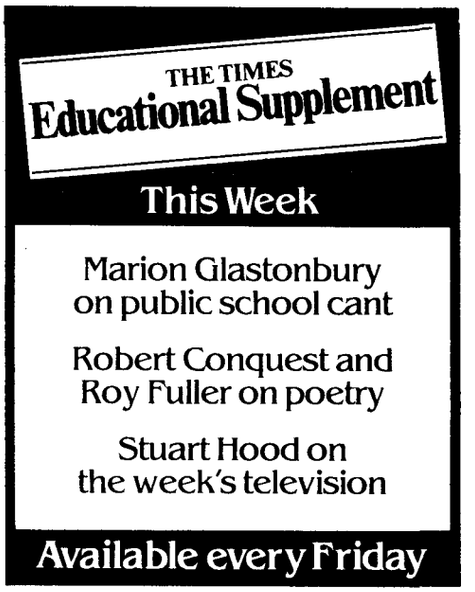
During his visit to the market Mr Richards was carrying a grip. On his arrest it was searched. Nothing incriminating was found. The bag contained law books, borrowed from a public library and renewed that very morning. Does a person who loiters in the market to steal purses first go along to the library punctiliously to renew his books before they become overdue? Though it was relevant to the defendant's 'intent' (basic to the charge of sus) no inquiries had been made by the police on the point.

All three police notebooks described how Mr Richards left Woolworth's, walked along the market and made the second attempt. None mentioned that he had stopped to buy tomatoes (found in the grip on arrest) and none mentioned that he had gone to another large store (confirmed by one of the police in oral evidence) – surely relevant, as the judge pointed out, since the police claimed Mr Richards had just made one attempt.

MR RICHARDS was lucky. Once he got to Crown Court with a good barrister the weaknesses in the police evidence spoke for themselves. But the happy ending to this story only heightens concern over the sus offence and the way it is used. If, instead of using the antiquated offence under the 1824 Vagrancy Act, the police had brought a charge of attempted theft, Mr Richards would have been entitled to opt for jury trial. There is no such option on a charge under the 1824 Act. If you ask the police why they do not use a charge of attempt more often in these cases they will tell you that it is difficult to prove attempt to the satisfaction of a court. The clear implication is that it is easier to get a conviction on a charge of sus. And yet the opposite should be the case, for the essence of the sus charge is that the suspect did what he did with a certain *intention*. It ought to be practically impossible to prove a person's intention without very hard evidence of things done.

It was indicative of this approach that the magistrate at Wells Street said that although he accepted that Mr Richards was of good character, he could not accept Mr Richards's account of his movements on the day of the arrest. It is not for a defendant in an English court to account for his movements in a manner acceptable to the bench. Thankfully, the Crown Court adhered to higher standards and a miscarriage of justice was put right. One wonders if the magistrate has learnt a lesson.

George Cunningham, MP for Islington South and Finsbury, is a Labour spokesman on home affairs.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DRUGS
Mike Miller & Richard Weekes

Joint action by pressure groups for cannabis law reform

Will it soon be lighting-up time?

UNTIL RECENTLY, cannabis smokers have been unwilling to organise themselves. The problem has not been the 'amotivational syndrome' – the theory that cannabis smokers are too stupified to live an active life – but rather the difficulty of bringing together all the disparate groups who use marijuana and welding them into a single campaign. The inaugural conference of the International Cannabis Alliance for Reform (ICAR), held in Amsterdam a fortnight ago and attended by 250 delegates and speakers from 20 countries, was a big step in that direction.

The conference attracted all sorts of marijuana users, from nascent American capitalists through European social democrats and anarchists to spiritualists, mystics and representatives of Third World producing nations. But it also brought out significant differences of approach, exemplified by two American groups at the conference. On the one side are those who are CAMP (Campaign for the Abolition of Marijuana Prohibition), who favour tactics of civil disobedience, publicly breaking the cannabis laws in order to change them. Their slogan comes from the Yippies: 'Turn on, tune in, turn yourself in.' On the other hand are those who are NORML (National Organisation for Reform of Marijuana Laws). They prefer to work through existing political channels by presenting the medical and human rights issues.

With or without ICAR, the cannabis phenomenon is beginning to assume the proportions of a global bad trip for many governments. The 1961 UN Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs, which binds all governments to prohibit the public production, distribution and sale of marijuana, has proved impotent to prevent a $44 billion cannabis market establishing itself in the US alone. Since the official fiction is that cannabis is under control, research into recreational use of the plant is discouraged. A 1973 survey by the BBC found that 39 per cent of a sample of British people between the ages of 17 and 34 claimed to have used it; estimates of the number of regular smokers in the US go as high as 30 million. Whatever the size of the market, no one is in any doubt that demand for cannabis in the West is growing rapidly.

BRITAIN'S HISTORY of contact with cannabis goes back to the 19th century. Cannabis use was a fact of life for the Indian population under the Raj, and the massive eight volume Indian Hemp Drugs Commission report of 1894 concluded: 'The prohibition of ganja is an interference with liberty which the government of India is not justified in undertaking.' Despite this acquiescence in cannabis use in India, the British government was happy to go along with the Egyptian delegate at the 1925 opium conference, who claimed that cannabis was the main cause of insanity in his country. The Egyptian proposal to bracket cannabis with opium as an addictive drug was passed, and from that point there was no going back. In the Thirties and Forties the US took up the anti-cannabis crusade, most vehemently in the person of Harry J. Anslinger, director of Federal Bureau of Narcotics.

Drug control as we know it today was part of the post-war pax Americana. The US occupying forces, for example, forced marijuana prohibition on Japan in 1948. And the UN Commission on Narcotic Drugs was formed, with heavy American backing, to police drug control around the world.

The UN Convention of 1961 placed cannabis in Schedule 4 along with heroin and two of the opiates as most dangerous drugs. Since then British governments have accepted the cannabis-heroin link as established, choosing to ignore the findings of the 1968 Wootton Report. But Holland, Italy and some states of America have recently 'reinterpreted' the Convention by decriminalising possession of small quantities of marijuana.

Britain's policy of blanket prohibition resulted in 11,500 marijuana convictions in 1978 (the US tally for that year was 465,000 arrests). At present 1,700 US citizens and 451 from the UK are in foreign jails for drug offences, the majority of them for cannabis. The growing black market is linked to organised crime and is seemingly immune to US pressure on Third World countries to wipe out the cultivation of cannabis crops. Three quarters of Colombia's foreign exchange earnings are estimated to come from supplying marijuana to the huge US market across the Gulf of Mexico – money which, because it must circulate outside the banks and national exchequer, leads to gross distortions of the Colombian economy Then there is the violence, and the link with that other black market, gun-running. 'At the time of the Lebanese civil war extraordinarily good Lebanese Red was reaching England,' said one dealer. 'It's an unfortunate fact that most cannabis has blood on it.' Dealers in Amsterdam noticed that the supply of Afghani Black dwindled to a trickle during the anti-Shah uprising in Iran. But in the last few months supplies have picked up again, and dealers expect the market to be flooded this summer as Moslem tribesmen in cannabis growing areas barter dope for guns to fight the occupying Soviet army.

Bob Randall: the only Westerner legally entitled to smoke pot

IT WAS in this context of international crime and governmental impotence that ICAR was formed two years ago, largely through the efforts of US NORML and the British Legalise Cannabis Campaign. A year ago ICAR won observer status on the UN Non-governmental Alliance on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice, and in June this year they will be applying for full status as a recognised UN lobbying body.

The Amsterdam conference was the first occasion on which the European and American direct action groups were directly exposed to the personalities and perspectives of ICAR. The odour of political fixing surrounding the prior decision to admit only one group per country as full ICAR members, the remainder being left as affiliate members, did not smell sweet to the radicals. It was hardly a coincidence that the European organisations accepted as members were those most likely to win respect in the UN.

The next question is the development of a European wing of the movement. The French and Belgian proposal to set up a European office in Strasbourg would be a first step in bringing the same sort of pressure to bear on the EEC that the Americans are applying at the UN. There are already signs that the EEC may be receptive to new ideas on drug control. A study group from Rotterdam, Bremen and Edinburgh universities is preparing a report of decriminalisation and drug policy in Holland, West Germany and Britain, sponsored by the EEC directorate general for research, science and education. This survey will compare the liberal Dutch policy – possession of fewer than 30 grams has been decriminalised, and there is tolerance of recognised 'house dealers' in youth clubs and coffee shops – with the Intoxicating Substances Law now being introduced in West Germany. Besides increasing penalties for possession and trafficking, the German law creates a new offence of promoting the use of drugs through public discussion or education.

ICAR also has to deal with the challenge of the cannabis-producing countries of the Third World. With the Japanese Clear Light Society as its only Asian member, and no representatives from either Africa or Latin America, ICAR has too much the look of a group of consumers. Despite a resolution that 'ICAR will seek to protect the interests of both consumers and producers of cannabis in such a way that each benefits in an equitable manner in the international cannabis market', it remains to be seen if the Alliance can go beyond the Brandt Commission in this area.

'We will be watching ICAR very closely', said Freddie Hickling, senior medical officer at Bellevue Psychiatric Hospital in Kingston, Jamaica. 'What most people in the Third World want to know is: are we going to be ripped off again?' In Jamaica, where ganja smoking is an everyday part of Rastafarian culture, Hickling prescribes marijuana to his patients. But there is already one American who is legally prescribed cannabis for medical reasons: Bob Randall (see photo), who suffers from the potentially blinding eye disease, glaucoma. US medical research has established that Tetra Hydra Cannabinol (THC), the active ingredient in cannabis, serves to reduce intra-ocular pressure, so preventing deterioration in the condition of glaucoma patients. Randall has won the right to be prescribed ten marijuana cigarettes a day, grown and rolled by the US government. With other work continuing on the use of cannabis to reduce nausea and loss of appetite in cancer patients following chemotherapy, and as a method of dilating the lungs of asthmatics, ten more American states are planning to join the 17 already permitting medical investigations into possible applications of the drug. Perhaps it is unrealistic to expect the present British government to be in the vanguard of moves to amend international drug law, but the Left should now take the issue seriously.

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London Diary

☐ If only because they prefer to remain anonymous, dissident Tory MPs are not threatened with being made 'subject to conference decisions'. And anyone who has attended a Tory Party conference will probably agree that the less democratic the party is, the better for all concerned. The Conservatives have never been particularly responsive to back-bench or intellectual criticism when in office – the only thing which really causes them to abandon the tenets of loyalty is a thundering electoral defeat. For this reason if for no other, the present gloating over 'cracks' in the Thatcherite facade seems premature and even facile. Remember how much Heath got away with, and how disliked he was among his juniors. Bear in mind the width and depth of anti-union feeling, even among non-Tory voters and even when it is the well-behaved steelworkers. Think of the huge power of patronage and the solidity of the Whip system (both greater than ever under a Tory administration).

Labour, to its credit (but to the incomprehension of outsiders), has most of its bitterest arguments in public. If criticism from senior MPs got in the way of a determined Prime Minister, Callaghan and Wilson would not have run their full disastrous terms. The very fact that radicals and socialists are now referring to quite right-wing Tories as 'moderate' because they happen to have reservations about Thatcher suggests to me that the wish is being father to the thought.

☐ So that almost insulting banality of the Milton Friedman television series could not have come at a more morale-boosting time. I don't mean by that to suggest anything wrong in the programming. In fact, I think it's absurd to insist, as the BBC are doing, on the show's being Professor Friedman's 'personal view'. Anyone would think there was something dangerous or challenging about his ideas. He gets prime time with Peter Jay every few years as it is. I remember the last episode, somewhere about the middle of 1976, and I still have a note of the core quotation from his words on welfare:

> If you're going to do good with someone else's money, there are two things involved in that. In the first place, to do good with someone else's money you first have to get the money. *That means that force and coercion are at the very centre of the welfare state idea.*

The italics are mine, but they could be anybody's. The two connected ideas, of 'do-gooding' and 'force and coercion', certainly define the Tory attitude to the welfare system, and have done since long before they heard of the Mekon from Chicago. The only solid thought to emerge from Friedman's film was that free immigration is a good thing both for hosts and for migrants – the very aspect of his teachings which Thatcher most deplores.

☐ Talking of 'force and coercion' in the welfare system, I know a well-placed hospital administrator who is prepared to swear to the following. A Minister of the Crown, with responsibilities for health, was discussing cuts in services. When the subject of terminal care came up for review, this Minister said that it was easy to make a saving in that area 'because you don't get complaints from the customers afterwards'. More on this, perhaps, when we've talked to a battery of lawyers.

☐ Now that anti-Iranian hysteria is subsiding a bit, and Iranian national pride is being at least considered (if not as much as American *amour propre*) here is a reminiscence. On 22 February 1979, I. F. Stone wrote an article in the *New York Review of Books*. It was entitled 'A Shah Lobby Next?', and it spoke of the Shah's 'formidable friends' ranging from the Chase Manhattan Bank through the oil industry to 'hungry academia'. Stone warned that 'we should have learned by now, but haven't, to keep out of Iran's domestic politics, and we may get a parallel lesson soon in keeping Iran's politics out of ours.' He went on to ask (all this exactly one year ago) 'What if the new Iranian regime makes demands of its own . . . lays claim to the foreign holdings and bank accounts of the Shah and the Pahlavi foundation? What if it demands the Shah's return for trial on charges of plundering the country? What if it accuses him, as absolute ruler, with absolute responsibility for untold tortures and deaths at the hands of SAVAK?' What indeed. How must it feel to have been I. F. Stone all these years, and seen all one's warnings ignored? And yet, when I met him at the time of Watergate, and glibly remarked that he must be pleased to see all his old enemies in the hole, he shrugged and said that he didn't think he'd ever get used to being on the winning side.

☐ Who said this about what, and when?

> President – has been hard at work endeavouring to create cordial relations between all classes and has met with some considerable success . . . As was anticipated the traditional leaders of the ex-political parties, now in recess (sic), have been hard at work to discredit the Government's new policy, but they have not been successful . . . People can write and speak freely and participate in all activities, with the one promise that they do not meddle in politics.

I promise I didn't make that last sentence up. Anyway, it's a CBI report on Pinochet's Chile, and it was published last month as part of a plea for the restoration of full diplomatic relations. If the NS ran that sort of prose on the subject of, say, rural pacification problems in Afghanistan, we would be dumped upon heavily. But we would not have the ear of the Foreign Office as readily as the hacks of the CBI seem able to do.

☐ I've only once in my life bought share certificates. They were in the projected *Morning News*, an uninspired name for a putative pro-Labour daily, which was to have been launched in 1967. A board of directors was assembled, with many a Labour peer and radical journalist on the letterhead. After a lot of springing about, and many a brave speech about 'this great movement of ours' and the millions of potential readers, the whole thing collapsed in an undignified fashion and we shareholders got, as I recall, sixpence in the pound back. (I only had two, being at school at the time, but a pound was a pound in those days.) I've kept the certificates, as a reminder of the pitfalls of speculation and also as a caution of another kind. The new Campaign for Press Freedom has many laudable aims, but if the idea of a 'Labour paper' is among them then it's a non-starter. Not just because of the huge resources required, but because the whole mentality of a loyal party paper is just what we don't need.

☐ The Commonwealth doesn't get much coverage in between summit meetings, but it isn't idle. It's nice to report that a Commonwealth Arts Organisation has been set up, with help from more than 30 member countries, to help preserve local arts and encourage mutual exchanges. The Chairman is Professor Rex Nettleford of the University of the West Indies, and the Secretary General is George Lanitis from Cyprus. At the last Commonwealth Games George and his colleagues put a few British noses out of joint by arranging a song for Zimbabwe at the closing ceremony. Now he says they are eager to welcome a free Zimbabwe to the family. I hope Lord Soames leaves enough of it standing.

☐ I had the honour of staying with Garfield and Grace Todd on their Shabani ranch last summer, and if their activity is to be considered 'terroristic' (which will be tested in a Rhodesian 'court' this week) then the word 'intimidation' needs revising as well. Incidentally, it is now well over a month since ZANU (PF) National Headquarters asked for a telephone line to be installed in their Salisbury office. It still hasn't been put in. Isn't this rather short-sighted of the Governor? His colleague Mr Whitelaw should speak to him about the advantages of having your opponents plugged in to the central exchange.

☐ Here is a startling quotation from Sir Ieuan Maddock, secretary of the British Association for the Advancement of Science, and formerly a panjandrum of the Ministry of Defence. (He used to be known as 'The Count of Monte Bello', because his was the three-two-one-ZERO! heard before the British bomb test which radioactivated that obscure island.) He was being pressed by Nicholas Bethell, Professor John Charap and others to make some sort of *démarche* about the plight of Soviet scientists at the next 'Helsinki' meeting on East-West exchanges. Maddock was reluctant to upset the Russians. 'After all', he said, 'it is the government they have elected to have'. He also said that he felt 'incompetent' to discuss political matters. Yes, indeed.

Christopher Hitchens

This England

Prizes: £3 book token for first entry, £2 tokens for others printed. Paste entries on a postcard.

☐ Eight pickets aged between 25 and 30 have filled in application forms to join South Yorkshire police after watching policemen in action during the steel strike. – *Daily Telegraph* (Russell Holmes)

☐ So many are unemployed or on strike in the steel town of Corby, Northants, that a local cinema is to show 'X'-rated films from 10 a.m. daily, starting next week, at reduced prices. – *Daily Telegraph* (R. Goddard)

☐ 'We're having good, hard spending – and the customers are buying nothing frivolous,' he added. TV games, radio-controlled toys, metal detectors were being snapped up. – *Lincolnshire Echo* (F. E. Goodhead)

☐ Magistrates yesterday showed mercy to a nun on driving charges after hearing that she had taken vows of poverty and had no money. – *Guardian* (F. Glynn)

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LETTERS to the EDITOR

Mothers and juries

From Stephanie Williams

I was a member of a jury at Knightsbridge Crown Court in October 1978. As a freelance writer and a mother of a (then) year-old child I made considerable efforts to arrange my affairs so that I could attend. One of the chief things that worried me about the jury panel was that I could find no other women with young children. There was a noticeable gap between the ages of the younger working women, say up to about 23 and those over 40.

At our first briefing the Clerk of the Court asked for all those who were self-employed to come forward; they could go home to continue earning. I requested to stay, and having explained my circumstances was told (for the first time) that (1) as a self-employed person I was entitled to claim compensation for loss of earnings and (2) as a mother I could claim the *entire* cost of having my child minded for the period I was on service – just produce a letter from the minder with her charges. This fact was not announced to the jury panel.

I was completely surprised, because as far as I can now remember, while it states clearly on the forms that mothers with young children may be excused jury service, nowhere does it explain that among the compensations you can claim is that of paying to have your child looked after. Thus a large number of women don't even bother to go. The Clerk of the Court confirmed this, saying that indeed they hardly ever had any women with young children on juries.

3 Headland Road, Repulse Bay, Hong Kong

Auditorial

From Sir Douglas Henley

There is room for legitimate difference of view on various aspects of the Auditor General's responsibilities and work, and I hope that there will be an informed debate about them following the issue of the Government's Green Paper on the subject. But may I comment briefly on one or two points raised by John Garrett (NS 1 February)?

(1) The C&AG's duties are laid down by Parliament in the Statutes, which also enabled the Treasury to require public audits not covered by legislation to be carried out by the C&AG. This provision, which was a useful long stop when it was first devised in 1866, is rarely used, and in no way infringes the essential independence of the C&AG in carrying out his audits.

(2) The Treasury does have final responsibility for determining the form of Government accounts, and for a good reason. The way financial results are presented is not just a technical matter but should reflect the objectives and policy of the body concerned. But my Department is always consulted, our advice is usually taken, and if I were seriously dissatisfied with the outcome I should report to Parliament.

(3) The C&AG is appointed by the Crown, and the provision that he shall examine accounts on behalf of the House of Commons does not make him formally the servant of Parliament. But his reports are made to Parliament and he works for the most part on their behalf. The close and effective working relationship between the Public Accounts Committee and E&AD speaks for itself. It has operated to the satisfaction of successive PACs over many years and has provided them with the basis of many reports highly critical of Whitehall.

(4) The great majority of my reports are not concerned with the results of financial or regularity audit in a formal sense, though that is certainly an important part of E&AD's duties. They are concerned with wider aspects of the financial management of all Government departments and some other public bodies. We have extended E&AD investigations into the effectiveness field, but, rightly in my opinion, we do not question the objectives of policy as such.

(5) Although for many years most E&AD recruits (including Dr Normanton) did enter at 18, ever since 1921 all of them have had specialist accountancy training under external arrangements and examination. It was not as a result of criticisms but on our own initiative that we decided some years ago that all our new entrants, who must be graduates, should be required to gain the CIPFA qualification. Our auditors are not of an inferior status, and I would be happy for Mr Garrett to have the views of the European Court of Auditors on those senior members of our staff who have accepted offers to work there on secondment.

Exchequer & Audit Department,
Audit House, Victoria Embankment, London EC4

Cinematic theology

From Jill Forbes

I should be grateful for the opportunity to correct the errors in the letter from Kevin Gough-Yates and Margaret Tarratt (NS 15 February) on the subject of the British Film Institute's support for lectureships in higher education. The choice of institution to which a lectureship will be awarded is not made by the officers of the Education Advisory Service but by a committee of independent academics chaired by a Governor of the BFI. On no occasion have applications from universities or polytechnics been either ignored or not passed on to the committee. Once a lectureship has been awarded the appointment to the post is again not made by the EAS but by the university or polytechnic concerned. 'Semiology' is not and never has been a prerequisite for the serious consideration of applications to the committee. Some successful and some unsuccessful applications have included semiology and some successful and some unsuccessful applications have not. The major constraint on the pursuit of the committee's policies has always been that funds have not been available for the award of more than one new lectureship per annum.

As the Chairperson of the 'appropriate committee' responsible for the awards, I very much regret that the NEW STATESMAN thought fit to publish Gough Yates and Tarratt's letter without first checking the facts.

69 Portnall Road, London W9

From Anthony Smith

I'm afraid I cannot recollect the promises – ascribed to me by Derek Malcolm – to 'cut down to size' a particular department of the British Film Institute. When I became Director of the BFI in November, so many new brooms were thrust simultaneously into my hands by self-appointed outside custodians of the Institute that the entire edifice would have been swept away had I heeded their combined recommendations. What I have endeavoured to bring about through a certain amount of rearranging of departmental functions are clearer lines of responsibility for educational work, book-publishing, periodicals, etc. The fact that one unit now appears smaller than it was before does not mean that it is being tailored to the size demanded by the *Guardian*'s film critic.

BFI, 127 Charing Cross Road, London WC2

The games nations play

From L. Clarke

'The Games of Nations' (NS 8 February) quotes *Pravda* as saying in 1958: 'An important factor in our foreign policy is the international relations of our sportsmen ... The success of our sportsmen abroad helps in the work of our foreign diplomatic missions and of our trade delegations.' That left-wing extremists and right-wing extremists are really the same kind of people seems plain enough from the following quote from the other end of the political spectrum. In evidence to the US Senate Committee on Foreign Relations in 1963, Senator William Fulbright produced a letter dated 22 November 1961 from the South African Government's public relations firm in the USA, addressed to South Africa's Department of Information, its employers. The US firm said that its work proved beyond doubt 'the value of positive non-political propaganda to create an effect essentially political ... Institutional publicity – touching on South Africa's general life, economic, cultural and social accomplishments, tourist attractions, sports, festivals, etc. – can tend to soften hard political attitudes and make for good feeling.' Since there is a clear admission here that South African sport is used for political purposes, what price the Lions rugby tour of South Africa?

Porthconan, Middle Road, Denham, Uxbridge, Middlesex

Censorship uncensored

From Louis McRedmond

In her review of *Ireland 1945-70* (NS 1 February) Margaretta D'Arcy writes: 'The contribution on censorship by Douglas Gageby of the *Irish Times* is disappointing and superficial ... perhaps predictable in an RTE-sponsored series ...' What on earth does this mean? RTE does not censor the theme of censorship, on aspects of which it has broadcast many programmes. If Douglas Gageby did not dwell on the subject it was for the good reason that his contribution was entitled 'The Media 1945-70'.

RTE, Dublin 4

Brotherly comment

From Brian Johnston

The silliness of the article by Sally Alexander & Barbara Taylor (NS 1 February) is an example of the kind of reasoning that prevents most of us who wish the women's movement well from taking feminism seriously. Theirs is an example of the 'born-again' feminism that proclaims that to be female is to be free of sin in a male-afflicted world: an insufferable moral smugness that does not prevent feminists from insisting that women have contributed significantly to this sinful world's history and that they therefore should share equally in its benefits. To *use* anthropology in order to 'construct a theory of patriarchal relations' is as distasteful, in its in-built bias, as to *use* anthropology to construct a theory of racial superiority. For sexual superiority informs the vocabulary of their argument. Thus women 'love' men while men 'need' women. While 'loving men' is problematic for women no such concession is made for men's love of women. It is small comfort that our authors do not wish 'the annihilation of biological male persons', but to devise a strategy that 'will eliminate not men, but masculinity'. Imagine the outcry if 'women' and 'femininity' or 'Jews' and 'semitism' were substituted!

146 Borstal Road, Rochester, Kent

From New York to LA

From Harry Harrison

I was most interested in Alan Evans's article on the joys of cycling across America (NS 1 February). However, I was greatly taken aback by his casual approach to the size of America. America does not stretch from coast to coast '. . . as far as from Edinburgh to Naples'. This distance, by air, is roughly 1,800 miles. In the US the city of Los Angeles is approximately 2,650 air miles from New York. To equal this distance in Europe the stout Edinburgh cyclist would have to peddle as far as central Iran or, if he took a more westerly course, would end up in the wastes of Siberia.

Kestrel Ridge, Vale of Avoca, Co. Wicklow

Note

We have received an interesting anonymous letter in connection with the Geoffrey Brighton case, but we could consider it for publication only if the sender were to let us have his/her name and address. If requested, for a particular reason, to withhold the name of a letter-writer, we would of course do so, but we can publish such a letter only if you trust us with your name. May we also remind you that letters are sometimes published in shortened form in order to make best use of space.

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FIRST PERSON
Arthur Marshall

Brown studies

In a wholesome spirit of sartorial self-criticism and a plucky determination to face facts and to see things and myself as they truly are, I have to confess that I am possibly a trifle inclined, when out of doors, to wear my macintosh on almost all occasions and in all weathers, fair and foul. Not for me your skimpy modern waterproof which comes to an end a foot or so above the knee, sends the rain water cascading down and seems especially designed to soak the lower halves of trousers. When, three years ago, I decided to throw financial caution to the winds and to splash out on a new mac, I had some difficulty in locating one of sufficient length to protect my knees. The lips of London sellers of such garments curled in contempt at my old-fashioned request for a really lengthy macintosh and these supercilious *vendeurs* were much astonished when, to their parrot cries of 'There's no demand for them these days', I wittily countered with 'Well, you have a demand now.' Eventually, and it is one more reason for admiring Devon, I ran one to earth in an Exeter boutique that caters for the sedate male middle-aged and, thus protectively kitted out, I have been wearing my mac more or less continuously ever since and moving freely about among the public, not exactly the cynosure of all eyes but just a humble chap and one of the jolly old crowd, don't you know.

Or so I thought until a really startling occurrence of a few weeks ago catapulted me and my togs into an enviable prominence. This totally unexpected happening took place on a Sunday and so I like to think, in my devout way, that the pleasing event was perhaps, if not actually inspired, at least blessed from Above. Here are the details. I do not know which, if any, Sunday newspaper you read (or how, in some of them, you ever manage to find your way through the various sections to the item of your choice) but the one of which I write is a highly reputable sheet, if a little inclined, so lavish are they with the printers ink, to make the hands grubby, a misfortune that a mere two minute session with luxuriously foaming Camay puts instantly to rights. This newspaper lists, of course, the day's television attractions, if such they may all be called, and on this particular day it announced, at 7.15 p.m., the usual weekly programme of *Call My Bluff*, and there, for all to see and goggle at, were the words '. . . with the elegant addition of . . .' followed by my name. Did you ever! I have waited nearly seventy years to be called 'elegant' and I mean to enjoy and treasure every moment of this verbal accolade. I doubt whether many Appleton inhabitants read this paricular newspaper and so I shall just drop a reference to it casually into the conversation.

But what can have caused this? Puzzling my brains, and liking to give credit where credit is indeed due (and who, in these unlikely pages, is more unstinting in his admiration and praise of our gracious Prime Minister and her very fine 1st XI Team, as admirable when relaxed in the pavvy as when out on the field and in the very thick of it), I put the whole thing down to my new suit from the Army & Navy Stores. This, a form-hugging uncrushable two-piece in, it says, '45% Virgin Wool' and bearing a label proudly claiming that it was MADE IN YUGOSLAVIA, has been displayed twice on television and has clearly caught the public eye and the public fancy and the public imagination. Just in the very unlikely case of your not having yet seen it, you'll probably like to know its colour: something between a darkish buff and a lightish fawn, with a bit of beige and milk chocolate thrown in. Brown, in fact, and defiantly I say it, flying in the critical face of whoever it was – Evelyn Waugh, possibly – who said that no gentleman, which one struggles so hopelessly to be, could ever conceivably be seen, alive or dead, clothed in brown. Seated at a table as we are for this telly programme, it is only on the top half of me that viewers can feast their eyes and so I could, if I were dishonest, cheat and wear, programme after programme, a pair of all-purpose grey bags from, where else, Marks & Spencer. But I do not cheat and those viewing my brown top half can rest assured that I am, so to speak, brown simply all over.

But if my suit has, in general, been pretty widely admired, I have to say that the adjective brown has some associations that are very far from being delightful. Although it now seems, thank goodness, to have gone out of fashion and features decreasingly on hotel menus, time was when no evening repast in an ill-lit and musty dining-room was considered complete without Brown Windsor soup, a gloomy liquid that was all too clearly surplus gravy from the last three days' joints, eked out with water, thickened with flour and heated to room temperature. One lapped it up, crumbling a stale roll, just prior to the sad-faced waiter shuffling morosely forward to say that the beef was off, and word 'off' here meaning 'available no longer' or 'all gobbled up', rather than off-colour or 'high', though both meanings must have been, on occasion and in hot weather, applicable. If the soup, which has a Victorian sound to it, originated in Windsor itself and, as one supposes, amongst the very highest in the land, it was doubtless heavily fortified with good bone stock and enriched with the finest sherry so that pleasingly fruity aromas ('Come, my dear, another ladleful?') hung about the Prince Consort's whiskers, until bedtime and a final going-over with a well-soaped face flannel removed them (the aromas).

Further disagreeable brown associations are provided by the dreaded Brownshirts, hateful Hitler's storm-troopers who helped to raise him to a peak of evil that makes the Kaiser seem like Little Nell, and also by a, to me, unacceptable phrase. It was, I think, early in the last (and would it were) war that I became aware of people saying dejectedly that they were browned off, meaning fed up or bored or both. Apart from the fact, irritating though it may be to others, that I have never in my life been bored (there is always *something* to shriek or marvel at) and only very seldom fed up, I consider it an ugly-sounding phrase originating, I can only think, in the kitchen, and an American kitchen at that, if I'm not mistaken ('Mary Lou's just browning off her cookies').

Poets have been noticeably loth to use the word brown. One searches in vain in the works of Burns for a reference to, perhaps, 'Ma bonnie wee brown Mary', brown here implying a healthily sun-tanned lassie who has caught the poet's wildly roving eye while she was, maybe, coming unaccompanied through the rye, hardly a recommendable perambulation with a certain Scotsman about or, if you prefer it, aboot. Poor old Tennyson, maundering away in the Isle of Wight and markedly listless (statistics show the area to be even more climatically relaxing than palm-strewn Torquay), certainly refers, in *A Dream of Fair Women* to 'A queen with swarthy cheeks', and though swarthy indicates dark-skinned, it is dark-skinned verging on black and very far from being brown. And then back he hurries to 'a daughter of the gods, divinely tall and most divinely fair', and although 'fair' can indeed just mean beautiful, who can doubt that it is imaginary blonde bombshells that the Laureate has got himself so excited about.

Or was it? I have for some time now had a theory about this poem. It is well known that in Tennyson's day, the summer months in and around Ventnor were greatly enlivened by the presence of swings and roundabouts and giant racers and dodgems – fairs, in fact. Presiding over the hoop-la stall, with one of them due any moment to be promoted to the Fat Lady booth, I seem to see two buxom beauties, Agnes Parker and her sister Doris, drumming up custom with shouts of 'Four hoops a penny' and reluctantly handing out the prizes (barbola-work vases). The poet, on one of his endless tramps across the island, spots them and is instantly captivated by their coarse charms, both of them brown as berries – an infatuation which he had, naturally, to conceal and mask with references to Queen Elizabeth and others. But as he wrote out the poem's title, *A Dream of Fair Women*, even that austere figure may have permitted himself a tiny and lascivious chuckle.

Roger Woddis

Its loveliness increases

The Government is planning to launch a publicity campaign to improve its unpopular image.

The nation, to our deep concern,
Is kicking against the cuts,
And even cranks
In the Tory ranks
Are doing their tiny nuts.
It seems that everywhere you turn,
The pattern appears the same,
But one thing's clear,
Whatever you hear –
The government's not to blame.

Life is lovely under the Tories,
Everything's as cosy as can be:
There's lots we should be thankful for
And blessings we should count,
Two million jobless, after all,
Is only a small amount.
We've treats galore
And lots of more lovely stories,
With big surprises, just you wait and see,
And when our Budget comes along next month,
You'll all be beside yourselves with glee.

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BOOKS IN GENERAL

Christopher Hitchens

Empress of Emergency

Indira Gandhi in the Crucible of Leadership by MARY C. CARRAS *Beacon Press* $13.95
Reason Wounded: An Experience of India's Emergency by PRIMILA LEWIS *Allen & Unwin* £5.50
The Scope of Happiness: A Personal Memoir by VIJAYA LAKSHMI PANDIT *Weidenfeld* £8.95
Indira Gandhi and her Power Game by JANARDAN THAKUR *Vikas (Croom Helm)* £4.95

A great deal of English writing about India is constrained by a gnawing fear of seeming ethnocentric. The memory of Europeans having briskly laid down the law on everything from *suttee* to the marketing of indigo, and the related fear of seeming patronising, drive some commentators into grotesque and apologetic postures. So that it can be a pleasure, when reading V. S. Naipaul or Nirad Chaudhuri, to see a brown writer saying out loud what white authors repress – that Indians are corrupt, unwashed, caste-ridden, chauvinistic and torpid.

This caricature is both denied and reinforced by the personality of Indira Gandhi. Although ostensibly 'modern' and 'Western' in her formation, she is quite capable of appealing to the narrowest and most backward aspects of Indian tradition in order to preserve her own skin. She is a subcontinental version of Richard Nixon or Harold Wilson; spitefully determined to overturn the verdict of recent history and absolutely unencumbered by principles. As such, she has a lot of white admirers.

The low point of their approach was reached during her 'Emergency' regime of June 1975. Well-heeled Western social democrats could be heard saying that, while of course the liquidation of democratic liberties wouldn't do for us, it might very well serve for Indians. Freedom, they intoned in a worldly way, was 'a luxury' for the starving and the penniless. I remember one of these advocates writing to *The Times* and saying quite without irony that Mrs Gandhi had caused the trains to run on time.

The sort of mind which comes to such a conclusion will almost certainly be a stunted one or a very confused one. Mary C. Carras, for instance, thinks this about the Indira Raj of 1975-7:

> Our case, however, seems to establish clearly that she acted responsibly in declaring the emergency. In the final analysis the decision required executive judgement. It was a political decision and, therefore, must be assessed by political standards. The Indian people's judgement was clearly against the excesses of Emergency Rule. Whether it was also against the decision to declare a state of emergency is not at all certain.

This gruesome clichéd paragraph is as useless as the title of the book. The 'Indian people' get the occasional walk-on part in her narrative, but her 'thesis' (it would be wrong to call it an analysis) is refracted entirely through the personal career of Mrs Gandhi. An entire chapter on the authoritarian versus the democratic in the mind of 'the Lady' (as Indians call her) becomes a sort of half-chewed psychohistory based on Mrs Gandhi's childhood and upbringing. It is entirely useless, except for one anecdote concerning Nehru. He cautioned his daughter to remember that the excesses of the French Revolution were always played up because they affected the privileged. A clear effort is then made to link this with the Emergency.

Of couse the Gandhi regime, like most other essays in Third World despotism, used a deal of socialistic demagogy to support itself. But the slightest examination shows that this was a Terror mounted *by* and *for* the privileged classes, who treated their dispossessed fellow-countrymen like aliens or subhumans throughout. We have had the work of David Selbourne and Dilip Hiro to amplify and detail this case. Now we have the testimony of Primila Lewis to remind us what it felt like.

Ms Lewis worked for years in the Mehrauli area, just to the South of Delhi. It is the sort of rural district where rich farmers exercise a dictatorship over the poor whatever party is in power – and in Mehrauli many of the farms belonged (and belong) to the Delhi political élite. Ms Lewis and her friends worked to set up a rural labourers union: a painstaking effort to offset the power of the high-caste goons, the landlords and the police. Just as their labours were beginning to bear fruit in terms of confidence and organisation, the leading lights were all arrested without trial by Mrs Gandhi's regime (Mrs Gandhi was herself one of the landowners in Mehrauli). From the moment of the arrest, Ms Lewis's narrative takes fire. She depicts the humiliation and the misery of the detainees very well; she also captures something of their dignity and resilience. Many memoirs of political victimisation aim at capturing this duality, but I can't remember one which does it better.

What distinguishes her book is its unaffected empathy with the poor of India, and with their battles and aspirations. Solidarity seems to come naturally to her, and to make itself inseparable from the way she writes. She concludes by saying that, in a funny way, during the Indira Raj, prison was the only respectable place for a decent person to be. That could sound windy and rhetorical, and has been made to do so by other writers. But it comes across as honestly as the rest of the narrative.

In her own way, Vijaya Lakshmi Pandit also affirms that poverty and destitution do not extinguish the ideas of liberty among the many. In Indian terms, however, she was born to the purple; an assistant of the Mahatma and the sister of Nehru himself. This involved her in the distasteful business of being Indira Gandhi's aunt – her protestations that there is 'nothing personal' in their political rivalry are rather too frequent to carry conviction. At any rate, she upheld the best of the family tradition by campaigning publicly and actively against the Emergency, and was rewarded by the appearance of informers and other scum sent by her niece to hang about the house.

Apart from this episode, which is described with some verve, the book is hard going. She has met a lot of people, exchanged a quantity of *mots* and had herself photographed at a great number of banquets for the famous. The foreword is, naturally, by Mountbatten.

Janardan Thakur has some reputation as the 'fly on the wall' in Indian journalism, and as a campaigner and muckraker in general. His titles are usually designed to enhance this image – *All the Prime Minister's Men, All the Janata Men.* The chief interest of his latest book is that it prefigures the return of Mrs Gandhi to power, and explains how the cretinous and obscurantist leaders of the Janata coalition frittered away the great democratic opportunity of the 1977 electoral revolt. His style is simply appalling, but his principles are pretty solid and his political nose excellent. One would like to think that his tale was an ephemeral one, but the first fruits of the restored Indira government make this a sadly optimistic view.

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William Walsh

Peacock & Monkey

Mr Sampath – The Printer of Malgudi, Waiting for the Mahatma, The Financial Expert
by R. K. NARAYAN *Heinemann* £5.50 each

R. K. Narayan, whose novels we must be grateful to Heinemann for re-issuing, was one of three writers – Mulk Raj Anand and Raja Rao were the others – who defined the area in which the Indian novel in English was to operate, establishing its primary assumptions, its main themes and its peculiar logic. He uses an easy, natural English unaffected by the weight and opacity of a British inheritance. His devoted readership, stretching from New York to Moscow, does not, however, include all the educated Indian reading public. Readers, not simply those of the Left, have attacked him bitterly for an exclusive concern with the middle class and for ignoring the deadly poverty of the masses. This was an accusation to which Narayan replied, without the least fleck of guilt or anxiety, that he was a middle-class man himself, the middle class was the only class he knew, and the only one he was able or wanted to write about.

In fact he works by focusing sharply and obeying his instinct for limitation. He derives from that form of Brahminism which was given an ethical stiffening by Victorian Protestantism and then gently blanched by British gentility. The writers he remembers influencing him make a curious trio – Jane Austen, Kipling, and P. G. Wodehouse! The novels are located in the town of Malgudi in Mysore and the delicately insinuated detail, a blend of oriental and 1920s British, gives the place a strong and representative identity. Malgudi itself is a metaphor of India. Whatever happens in one happens in the other and, the reader begins to believe, what happens there happens everywhere.

The gifts that make his fiction so fresh and humane are, in the first place, a creative accuracy of notation, the capacity to render the meticulously finished surface of things; in the second, considerable deftness in moral and psychological analysis; and then, here and there, tactfully, obliquely, cogently, a restrained poetry of reference when significant points of action or character are related to ancient Indian myths. So, for example, *The Financial Expert* is an exact account of village usury and city deceit, and a controlled probing into the motives of money-making. It can also be interpreted as a commentary on the dealings of the goddess Lakshmi with one of her devotees, or perhaps the account of a quarrel between her and the goddess Saraswathi.

Most of the novels, blending sadness with comedy, tartness with resignation, deal with the effort of some harassed unselfconfident member of the middle class to achieve 'a life freed from distracting illusions and hysterics'. He tries, like Srinivas in *Mr Sampath* or like Sriram in *Waiting for the Mahatma*, to extricate himself from the habitual, dreamy automatism of his past, a desperate task in a tradition where the influence of the given is so powerful. He is moved to do so usually by some encounter which precipitates a crisis of consciousness and a new effort of will. The effect of Sriram's exalting meeting with Gandhi in *Waiting for the Mahatma* is to free the character from an age-old somnolence and to determine him in favour of a completely new life. Margayya's meetings in *The Financial Expert* – with Arul Doss, the dignified peon of the Co-operative Bank, with the impressive priest in the seedy temple, or with Dr Pal, the author of the sociological work *Bed Life*, later changed to the best-selling *Domestic Harmony* – perform the same function. The central figure's stumbling into independence from the first mild accidie and brooding dissatisfaction is defined in minutely specified circumstances.

In Narayan there is a deeply felt contrast between the shuffling multitude and the isolated individual. The lonely Sriram, celebrating his 21st birthday in *Waiting for the Mahatma* with his formidable granny as his only guest, hears night and day 'the babble of the big crowd moving on the market road'. Another of the findings of the Narayan sensibility has to do with the way in which human character is constituted, not simply influenced, by the expectations of others, many of his characters – Sriram is an instance – being Indian specifications of that human type which develops only in response to hints from outside.

Again there is Narayan's belief, which is demonstrated in such enigmatic figures as Mr Sampath, that so much of experience is inexplicable and resistant to straightforward analysis. Then there is a sense of the presence and value of things, physical objects, like a steel pen, a teak desk or a sandalwood image Sriram's grandmother had received from her father and passed on to him, the worn and hallowed density of which makes them a protection against the ruthless flow of time.

Narayan has a highly developed sense of human discrepancy, and much of his distinctive and buoyant comedy comes from the skilful management of opposites. There is a scene, for example, in *Mr Sampath* in which priests 'with their foreheads stamped with ash and vermilion', murmuring ancient rituals, dedicate to the gods Mr Sampath's third-rate studio for the production of a fifth-rate epic, dabbing as they do so a dot of sandal paste on each of the cameras. Much of the comedy of *The Financial Expert*, which includes in Margayya probably Narayan's greatest single comic creation, comes from this friction of discrepancies.

Narayan recalls in his memoir, *My Days*, where we see, incidentally, how markedly biographical much of the material of his fiction is, that his earliest memory is of himself sitting half-buried in sand with a peacock and a monkey for company. The monkey must have been Hanuman, the monkey god of wisdom and benevolence, the peacock, pecking at every ant which came within range of his vision, the image of his intelligent and mocking eye.

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ISBN 92-2-102072-X £5.65

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John Berger

Suicide

Pips of the full moon
spilt on the roofs
the childhood lamps
in my village

emptied
the moon was a dried
bleached apricot

to part

on nightshift
the wind is breathless
for the skies too
have silicosis

what is being cast in the sand?
I placed my ear
to the earth's rib
the silence of cement

if the moon is full
my heart
when we return
let us walk by the quarries
to look down
at where our body lies.

Migrant Words

In a pocket of earth
I buried all the accents
of my mother tongue

there they lie
like needles of pine
assembled by ants

one day the stumbling cry
of another wanderer
may set them alight

then warm and comforted
he will hear all night
the truth as lullaby

Address Unknown

(Migrant Worker)

The sky is blue black
starlings unfold their wings
quit their pediments
to write a letter
returned.
The setting sun
fills teeth with gold
like a shred of meat
I'm lodged in this town.

After the Golden Age

MICHAEL SCHMIDT discusses publishing poetry in translation

Poetry may get lost in translation. Money usually gets lost in publishing translated poetry. Most commercial publishers with poetry lists keep to a translation-free diet. Those who over-indulged themselves in the golden age of translation – the late 1960s and early 1970s – are cutting their losses and moving briskly along routes recommended by sensible accountants. There are exceptions to the trend, but generally speaking the publication of translated poetry has fallen to the smaller magazines (*Modern Poetry in Translation*, edited by Daniel Weissbort, was an important catalyst) and the little presses whose vocation seems to be *not* to make money. Commercial factors are likely to reinforce the trend.

Perhaps it's not such a bad thing. Looking back to the golden age, I am alarmed at how little was actually achieved. Excellent translators were at work (there always are a few), but for each of them a dozen incompetents were busy traducing. Good books appeared, but much of what was published has already proved ephemeral. A turbulent theoretical debate about *how* to translate got going. It was of marginal interest. Only successful translation will validate a method. Rare skills and sympathy make X's version of Y's text an English *poem*. An introductory essay can be more informative and moving than a whole volume of hobbling paraphrases.

Traditional methods of translation are vindicated by Michael Hamburger's versions of the German poets; Robert Lowell's 'imitations' often justify that method; Elaine Feinstein's Tsvetaeva makes sense of the 'pick-a-back' method; Sisson's Virgil, Lucretius and Dante live up to the Horatian imperatives; Zukofsky's Catullus is controversial and illuminating. The useful essays on translation (as on poetry) are usually by successful practitioners and far from theoretical in character. A new generation of talented translators has emerged – but just too late to catch the receding tide of publishing interest.

The publisher helps to decide what will be translated. We at Carcanet were fortunate to have the advice of Daniel Weissbort when we started our translations list. Originally we specialised in Russian, East European and German poetry. Latterly we have turned our attention to the Romance languages and the Latin classics. There is a logic in our programme, but we sense its inadequacy. Though our scheme is more coherent than most, it partakes of some of the errors of judgment of the golden age.

In that age, what sort of work got translated? Commercial interest (there was a larger immediate poetry market then) dictated certain patterns. Dissident poets who came west with a fanfare were valuable properties, whatever the quality of their work in translation. Journalism alerted a market. Then there were those dissident poets who stayed at home but whose protests were recorded on the UPI and Reuters seismographs. The publication of books by dissident writers presents problems, however, if published in advance of their distinguished contemporaries; they offer a distorted view of the literature from which they spring. Their work, if it has merit, should be available of course; but it can be understood by English readers only if they have a sense of the wider culture in which it was produced. We tended sometimes to forget that not all poets who are not dissidents are negligible. Some are outstanding despite their lack of ready sales potential. The plethora of East European and Russian translations in the golden age, as compared with translations of poetry from France, Italy or Scandinavia, for example, indicates that it was not solely the quality of the poetry which determined editorial policy.

Publishers of translations should provide as full a context as possible for the volumes they publish. This suggests a programme. How does it work? Take, for example, the poems of Miklos Radnoti. He wrote out of a common classical tradition. His development of the eclogue form, qualified by the circumstances in which he wrote, is eloquent if the translator is familiar with the tradition as it exists in his own literature. His introduction to the book will be biographical *and* critical. This will logically lead to related publications – translations of classical (non-Hungarian) works which have contributed to the poet's tradition, translations of his significant contemporaries. Beyond the single volume, the list itself has a form, an intent.

To some extent we are forced, by our own reading, to acknowledge the persistence of a European tradition despite the literary and social upheavals of the century. Our classical translations, our Dante projects, our Schiller, Heine, Laforgue and Corbière books, among many others, are part of our strategy of presenting *modern* poetry in translation. It is, we believe, essential to keep a conscious sense of the common traditions which nourish such disparate work as Saba's, Radnoti's, Milosz's, Esenin's, Pilinszky's and Pessoa's. We have neither the means nor the translators to go as far as we should like, but we have sketched a map of intent.

And yet, as publishers we possess between us at most six languages. We depend on our translators and advisers, judging for ourselves only the English version. We are often lost in Babel, acutely aware of the limitations of our competence and our means.

The saddest aspect of the market is its finality. If a fine poet from, let us say, Kakania, is ill-translated and his book published by a reputable house, English readers for at least a generation will know him only by those bad translations. The market is so small that there is seldom room for competition. That is one reason why the golden age looks tarnished to me now: dozens of poets bit the dust of England. A few found haven here, surviving their passage to this inhospitable climate. Translation can perform miracles, but only rarely. In recent years, too much has been expected of it, and too much attributed to it.

Among this week's contributors:

KEN WORPOLE helped to found the 'People's Autobiography of Hackney', a local history project which has been involved in publishing many books of Hackney working-class life.

MICHAEL SCHMIDT is a director of Carcanet and lectures on poetry at the University of Manchester.

ANDREW SAINT is the author of *Richard Norman Shaw*. He currently works for the GLC.

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History Workshop 2:
A Ghostly Pavement

KEN WORPOLE discusses the political implications of local working-class history

> It comes back to the question we have already emphasised: is it sufficient for a philosophical movement to devote itself to the development of a specialised culture for restricted groups of intellectuals, or must it, in elaborating a thought which is superior to common sense and scientifically coherent, never forget to remain in contact with the 'people' and, moreover, find in this contact the source of its problems to be studied and solved?
>
> Antonio Gramsci *The Study of Philosophy*

IN 1908 A GROUP of radical working-class students at Ruskin College, increasingly alarmed at the direction in which the college was being guided by its management, launched the 'Plebs League', a discussion group to argue the case for an independent system of working-class adult education, funded wholly by the labour movement. A year later, in 1909, following a student strike at the college, many of these same students left to set up the Central Labour College and promote their new journal, *The Plebs Magazine*. From that year until 1964, when the National Council of Labour Colleges agreed to dissolve itself and enter into the general educational apparatus of the TUC Education Committee, the Labour College movement had been an unstinting provider of Marxist education for the organised working-class movement. It had its own full-time college, it ran numerous correspondence courses, published many books and pamphlets, organised weekend and summer schools, and retained to an extraordinary degree its consciously chosen educational constituency: working-class trades unionists. One of the former organisers of the NCLC, Andrew Boyd, recently described in *Tribune* what happened in 1964 when the TUC finally incorporated the NCLC programme into its own educational work:

> Immediately after rationalisation, the education department of the TUC instructed its regional education officers not to have classes on such subjects as public speaking or the history of the British working class.

A TUC internal enquiry carried out in 1975 admitted that, 'British trade unions possess the worst education service of any trade movement in the world.' We have to ask ourselves why the study of British working-class history was seen as so potentially subversive, and why there was no effective labour movement resistance to this seemingly irrational act of self-mutilation.

It is obvious to anyone that the last two decades have produced an outstanding growth in the range of work done in the field of Labour studies and the more informal modes of working-class self-organisation and forms of cultural identity. Social history has been probably the fastest growing sector of academic study within the universities for some years now. There has been a proliferation of research papers, published essays and full-length books emerging from this powerful intellectual current. Yet despite all this activity, I seriously wonder whether we could with any confidence suggest that we have a more historically conscious labour movement now than we have done at previous periods of crisis in the past? I would think not.

Two observable trends have presented themselves openly and consistently. The first has been the so far irreversible tendency for all historical projects to find themselves a home within the ambivalent political world of higher education, and then turn naturally to that same world for their validation and legitimation. The move, as it were, from draughty Co-op halls and trades halls to modern polytechnic lecture rooms was more than a change of venue.

The second and related trend has been that the publication and dissemination of the work produced has been, for the most part, unproblematically offered into the hands of the commercial publishing houses, and consequently distributed to a readership chosen by the market priorities of capital investment. Expensive hardbacks for the higher education libraries, rather than pocket books for the people, has been the general trend.

A further source of evidence of the isolation of much contemporary labour history from its originating constituency is its more recent obsession with its own theoretical status. Like Bishop Berkeley, many socialist historians have become seized with terror at the lack of any positive proof that they and their subject really do exist.

Hoxton Market Mission & Ragged School

That debate, which is beginning to dominate the History Workshop Journal, has become so abstract that it is now impenetrable to anyone other than full-time academic historians. The retreat into a closed epistemology curiously comes at a time when contemporary class conflict is more pronounced than it has been for many years. Surely the first responsibility of a socialist historian is to promote as widely as possible the discussion of the accumulated historical experiences of the working class and socialist movement, and help re-create a strong sense of the history which brought people to the positions inherent in contemporary political struggles. Otherwise many people will come to cynically regard the new socialist history in the same terms as Milton regarded the libertarian rhetoric of his period: 'a fugitive and cloistered virtue, unexercised and unbreathed, that never sallies out and sees her adversary. . .'

HISTORY IS an integral part of the cultural ecology in which we live, and to which we contribute. It should also include an awareness that there is a common moral responsibility inherent in the historical process, both backwards to our parents' and grandparents' generations and forwards to our children's.

People associated with radical politics have

Crawford Street School 1906

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at different times written about what such a consciousness feels like. It is wonderfully described by M. K. Ashby in her biography of her father, *Joseph Ashby of Tysoe*:

> But Joseph was interested now in the district he was seeing. Three things came to him in this period; some idea of how events elsewhere affected his own home and village; some knowledge that other communities produced other manners and other men; and then the sense, to describe it as best I can, that under the wide acreage of grass and corn and woods which he saw daily there was a ghostly, ancient tessellated pavement made of the events and thoughts and associations of other times. This historical sense he shared with many of the men he met about his work. Their strong memory for the past was unimpaired by much reading or novelty of experience, and yet their interest had been sharpened by the sense of rapid change.

This quality of consciousness is actually very weak, I suspect, at present within the traditionally defined labour movement, despite the current popularity of social history themes in the popular culture of television drama and paper-back publishing. This paradox needs examination. For it is obviously true that social history themes on television have been very much in evidence in the past few years. *When the Boat Comes In*, a serialised drama set in the Tyneside docks and shipyard communities in the 1920s and onwards, has been repeated on three occasions in the past six years. The series was very much concerned with the militant left-wing political attitudes of many of the Tyneside workers in that period. *Days of Hope* was a four-part, and excellent, series built around the political fortunes of a working-class family between 1910 and the defeat of the 1926 General Strike. This series was totally sympathetic with the militant working-class politics of that period. Lewis Grassic Gibbon's *A Scots Quair* was also recently dramatised for television, as was Mervyn Jones's fine novel, *Holding On*, based on trade union and community solidarity in the East End of London.

This popularity is even more in evidence if one looks at contemporary publishing. Commercial publishers have been quite eager to publish detailed working-class autobiographies, or social histories of specific rural urban communities. There is almost a small industry devoted to West of Ireland peasant reminiscences. Hutchinson have published perhaps six volumes in paperback of Fred Archer's accounts of his Vale of Evesham village childhood. Flora Thompson's classic *Lark Rise to Candleford* is permanently in print now. Two working-class women from the East End of London, Grace Foakes and Dolly Scannell, have both had commercially published several volumes of personal autobiography. Winifred Foley's marvellous *Child of the Forest* was originally serialised on BBC radio and then published in hardback and paperback. Robert Roberts's two excellently written books about his Salford childhood, *The Classic Slum* and *A Ragged Schooling* sell consistently. Well-documented accounts of popular civilian struggles during the second world war have become mainstream bookshop stock. And even left publishers are now busy publishing, or re-printing classic works of labour movement propaganda, or autobiographies of known and unknown militants. In the last 18 months, for example, Lawrence & Wishart have re-published Phil Piratin's *Our Flag Stays Red*, Harry Pollitt's *Serving My Time*, Willy Gallacher's *Revolt on the Clyde* and Lewis Jones's two documentary novels *Cwmardy* and *We Live*. Self-published and independently published labour movement autobiographies are quietly finding the light in many different towns and cities. Feminist publishing houses are involved in serious work of autobiographical discovery and retrieval. The autobiographical mode is in the ascendency.

All this surely adds up to something important – it ought to. Yet I'm not sure it does. The crucial element lacking in the chemistry by which such rich works might help shape popular class consciousness is any kind of social context for their reception. They are watched, if they are television programmes, or read, if they are books, as discrete products of self-contained historical reconstruction. The naturalism of the television series or the anecdotal autobiography is to a large extent self-sealing. Television companies and commercial publishing firms produce these programmes or books as though they had been found buried in polythene beneath the foundations of the welfare state to be re-discovered at a later date as representative, but disconnected, texts of a previous culture. The continuity of experience is not an ideology widely promulgated within the capitalist mode of cultural production.

This is why the preclusion of history from the TUC education programme, and its decline in significance, until recently, as a subject within the WEA tradition is so critical. And this is why the new local people's history movement is so important, possibly central, to the project of reviving the historical component of an affirmative class consciousness. This is why it is a matter of priority that the relationship between the growing number of autonomous local history projects, nearly all of whom have attached themselves to the flourishing Federation of Worker Writers & Community Publishers, and the movement associated with the Ruskin History Workshop and the History Workshop Journal, is subject to a new discussion of common aims and modes of activity.

The relationship to date has been an uneasy one, if anything growing more distant. Yet there is no doubt that many of the community history projects were directly inspired by attendance at one or more of the Ruskin Workshops. It was at the Workshop on 'Childhood' in May 1972 that many political activists, but non-historians, were inspired to see the political importance of the new history movement. Producing shareable and common history from the spoken reminiscences of working-class people seemed a positive and important activity to integrate with various other new forms of 'community' politics. This development coincided with many activists' involvement in some kind of alternative newspaper or printing resources centre which provided the material and productive basis for local publishing. And at first there was some very important practical and political encouragement given by Ruskin History Workshop activists to the first groups started. But on the whole, parental interest waned rather quickly. Many Ruskin students, it seems, on leaving the college, went into the academic sphere rather than returning to the local history initiatives which seemed to be being promoted as the way forward in 1972. 'Dig where you stand' was the motto of the day, but some had already left the site and were down the road before the first morning tea-break, leaving the rest to carry on with blunt and inappropriate instruments – and no architect's drawings.

I WOULD LIKE here to point out some of the particular and important strengths of the local projects in terms of building a much wider, co-ordinated working-class constituency for the workers' history movement. To begin with, in Bristol, Hackney, Peckham, Rochdale, Southwark and Tottenham, for certain, local history projects have been run in conjunction with the Workers' Educational Association as continuing evening classes. It has been the community-based groups, ironically, who have been important in helping revitalise the WEA and radicalise it as a workers' education body. This has created open and accessible meeting places for working-class people to meet each other around the theme of making the history of their lives. Often there have been genuine political difficulties, in that for many people there seems to be no link between past experiences of struggle, hardship and oppression and contemporary attitudes towards socialist and trade union politics. But these difficulties must be faced and talked through. And for many elderly people in areas such as those mentioned above where this local history work is being carried on, it is colour not class which seems to be the self-evident reason for the continuing inadequacies of housing, health facilities and secure employment. If the historical continuity of working-class exploitation is something which we know to be true, it is therefore something which we should argue in as many places as possible.

Secondly, many of the local history projects are based in known local 'alternative' and self-produced institutions: Bristol Broadsides, which publishes the work of the WEA history projects, with the Full Marks Bookshop; Brighton with the Queenspark newspaper, publishing project and shop; Aberdeen with the Aberdeen People's Press; Hackney with the Centerprise bookshop and community centre; Stepney with the THAP bookshop and publishing project; Peckham with the Peckham Bookplace. All of these centres have known socialist colourings and therefore the local history work is clearly seen as being part of a partisan cultural and political strategy/presence/formation. I think that in these areas it is now commonly accepted that it is active socialists who have helped to provide the energies and time to promote the interest in, recording and publishing of local working-class experience. This helps explain why, for example, there was a genuine and widespread local outrage when the Centerprise project was set on fire one night by the neo-fascist '11th Hour Brigade'. Though, to an important degree, its local history commitment and its local publishing work it had earned a widely shared agreement to its being an important institution in the cultural fabric of Hackney working-class life. It is now, for many people in Hackney, the first place to bring old photographs, old letters, the notebooks of recently deceased relatives, partly written or completed autobiographies, as well of course as people's own poetry and other writings. Locating history work in these local institutions provides the structure for a large degree of local accountability for the accuracy and sympathy of the work done.

It is the study circle, discussion group, evening class – call it what you like – which best

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provides the context in which the study of history, local and national, can be socialised and politicised. The substantial account of a WEA history class organised by Edmund Conway in Blackburn, and described in History Workshop Journal No. 3, is the kind of reporting back we need much more of. It is significant that in the index to the first six volumes of the Journal, which appeared in No. 7, under the headings 'Local History', 'Report Back', 'Work in Progress', or 'Workers' Education', there is no reference to any of the activities or achievements of the local history projects associated with the FWWCP.

Nearly all of these local projects have proved to be in important positions from which to intervene in and influence history teaching in local schools. And it is in schools where intervention is rather crucial. All of the projects mentioned have won support from local teachers and many of the locally published books are now extensively used in schools, with projects lasting from a few days to a whole term built around particular local history publications. In some schools CSE syllabuses are being re-drawn to include local working class autobiographies and local histories.

Through active membership of these local history projects, many people have gained important experiences in being producers and organisers of material cultural production. And further, through the national co-ordinating work of the Federation, many people are, for the first time in their experience, travelling regularly across the country to other towns and cities to take part in management and editorial meetings of the national body.

Much of the criticism of the political weakness of the local history projects comes from those whose socialism seems to be largely based on the socialism of distribution, which is characterised by a pre-occupation with end products and the 'correct socialist consciousness' of the final texts. The books are not read in their own right, but as texts which can be sifted for particular nuggets, which can then be added to other nuggets sifted from other books to make yet more texts. There is nothing intrinsically wrong with this process, but one mode of socialist history is the mode of the long revolution, and the other of the short revolution.

The autobiographical mode, widely espoused by the local history projects, is the mode of the long revolution, slower, acknowledging difficulties, mixing occasional insights into the prime causes and determinants of life – homelessness, redundancy – with experiences of sudden bereavement, a loving relationship, mental breakdown in the family, the party that lasted for three days, the failed attempt to emigrate. And who is to say that the latter experiences do not help us clarify the complexity of the revolution we have ahead of us? The problem is not the long revolution or the short revolution; history probably expects both. But which is best fought first, given the political formlessness and difficulties of our times?

Blake Morrison

On a 'Guilt-go-Round'

Wild Oats by JACOB EPSTEIN *Alison Press* £5.90
The Leaves on Grey by DESMOND HOGAN *Hamish Hamilton* £5.95
In the Secret State by ROBERT McCRUM *Hamish Hamilton* £5.95
No, Not I by DEE PHILLIPS *Hodder* £5.50

The search for new talent and changing fashions tends to be particularly feverish at the beginning of a decade, and it's likely that all four of the novels under review this week (three of them débuts, and three by writers in their twenties) will prompt talk of originality and promise. Each author does have something distinctive – Epstein humour, Hogan stylistic risk-taking, McCrum high-spy suspense, and Phillips psycho-social insights. But it would be a disservice to these authors to make overmuch of their comparatively modest achievements; and even the most fanatic of trend-spotters would be hard put to find here signs of a common new sensibility.

As so often happens, it's the American work which catches the eye. *Wild Oats* is at one level the archetypal campus novel, with the usual set-pieces (boring lectures, dope and drinking escapades, cheating and cramming), and one outstandingly good episode in which the hero, Billy, attempts to explain 'Dover Beach' to a black fellow-student who has to write an essay on it ('He's there with his girl, right, who he loves and everything. And he turns to her, and he's all sad about what a fucked-up, hopeless world they live in . . .The only thing he can do, this guy is saying, is if he and his girl can count on each other'). The novel has a fine eye for the absurdities of academe, but because it sees all through the hero Billy, a vulnerable and fantasising freshman, its British counterpart is less *The History Man* than Larkin's *Jill*.

On another level *Wild Oats* is a Jewish family saga with strong echoes of *The Graduate* and *Portnoy's Complaint*. The asthmatic Billy, his neurotic mother and his half-wit stepfather-to-be Henry are all in their different ways 'fucked-up', trapped on a 'guilt-go-round' they can't get off: their painful, if amusingly handled relationship is mirrored in that between Billy's roommate, Randy, and his father, who is dying of cancer. Finally, and perhaps least interestingly, *Wild Oats* is a love story describing Billy's hopeless pursuit of a former girlfriend, Zizi, and ending with his humiliation. The novel's material might have made a lesser writer smartass or self-pitying, but Epstein has an excellent command of tone, and an affectionate, ironic stance.

The Leaves on Grey is written in the kind of prose that's usually called 'poetic' – except that no poet would let himself be carried downstream by language as helplessly as Desmond Hogan does. 'Impressions' drift past – flowers, wine, beautiful and soulful women, high-sounding European place-names, sentimental notions about artists and writers, inept metaphors, 'unbeknownst' longings and wistfulness, and passages like this:

> Drinking orange juice against a sea of evanescent blue the woman – looking in the direction of Tir-na-n-óg, the legendary land of youth – said, 'I have felt this pain in my right breast for a long time. Who knows but that my time as an artist is up.'
>
> Later Liam said, 'We were privileged to know these people.'

Who knows but that the reader's patience is at times sorely tried.

Aware, perhaps, that it's all a bit too dreamy and insubstantial, the Hogan raft does once or twice wash up on firm ground. There's solidity of a kind in the main narrative for example – the story of the narrator's friendship with a man he keeps telling us is special, Liam, and of their love for Sarah. The recurrent theme of spiritual withdrawal and the descriptions of Dublin in the 1950s also indicate that the novel is more than an aimless meandering. But Hogan's attempts to introduce a political element into *The Leaves on Grey* are as tokenistic and misty-eyed as one might expect: even his accounts of contemporary Derry take on an 1890s tinge. It might hearten some to know that Ernest Dowson is alive and well and living in Desmond Hogan's typewriter, but it's hard not to agree with Liam's description of himself and the other characters as 'the faceless privileged, those ignorant of all but beauty'.

Robert McCrum's *In the Secret State* seems uncertain whether to make a full-scale indictment of the British Establishment or merely to intrigue. The hero with the rather heavily symbolic surname is Frank Strange – 'Frank' because he's as blunt as anyone in the secrecy business ever could be, 'Strange' because he belongs to a remote world of government security, 'Frank Strange' because his old-style loyalty and honesty is, it seems, odd and unacceptable to his cynical colleagues. Or rather ex-colleagues: the novel opens on Strange's retirement day and with his efforts to get to the bottom of some very dubious goings-on in his agency. Strange has one ally in the agency, Quitman, who slips him as much information as possible; but the rest of his former colleagues are trying to block his activities and if necessary bump him off. Though a thriller element dominates much of the novel – will Strange expose the corruption before the ministry does him in? – McCrum also shows signs of wanting to make some serious point about the power of Whitehall in contemporary society – 'the way they manage the news, and blackmail politicians. . . the corruption of the jury system in state trials.' But the spy-thriller format doesn't readily accommodate this kind of protest: it can disturb with its evocation of the sinister and secret, but is too besotted by the maze-like corridors of power to see corruption sufficiently hard and clear.

No, Not I – no, not you either if you're looking for a novel of linguistic energy. But if it's low-key realism you're after, then this account by a child-psychotherapist of a teenager called Alan won't be without its rewards. Alan's attachment to his grandmother, his ambivalent feelings towards his errant mother, his inability to get on with his peers – all this has a case-history authenticity. A pity, the novel should end so unconvincingly: even as an irresolute resolution, it's not – given all we've got used to – irresolute enough.

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ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

Safety First?

ANDREW SAINT discusses playgrounds

Some months back I took my four-year-old to a playground further afield than usual. I had remembered it as a small affair with a few swings, a sandpit, a wonky see-saw and a 'witch's hat' (otherwise 'ocean wave' – it has ribs radiating downwards from the top of a central pole and rotates). The climax was a spectacular slide, probably eight or ten feet tall, with a majestic chute. I used to sneak the occasional go on it myself, not I confess without a tremor; and on my daughter's behalf I felt truly nervous about the steps, for she had once, happily without grave result, tumbled right down those of a much smaller slide. But since children at play hate one to hover, I had with misgivings kept my distance, praying (doubtless wrongly) that I was near enough to pounce if need arose. Now, however, there was no cause for apprehension. The slide and the witch's hat had gone. A rugged heap of logs to clamber upon and a spick-and-span little blue climbing-frame were their replacements.

The story could be told of a thousand 'fixed equipment' playgrounds in Britain. Everywhere the old 'moving' apparatus is gradually being phased out or modified. In its place appear 'static' pieces such as climbing-frames, colourful plastic polyhedra, concrete tunnels or improvised constructions of wood. The chief victims are those grand old iron standbys of the municipal playground, the rocking horse, the witch's hat and the 'plank swing', a machine propelled at either end by standing children while others sit on the beam between them, holding on for their lives as it hurtles back and forth. Swings, slides and roundabouts are too popular to eradicate, but they too are decreasing in number and changing in type. Tyres nowadays are orthodox for swing seats; slides have their chutes continuously welded and are either built on mounds or have their tops boxed in; merry-go-rounds have running boards and rails around their circumference.

Why is all this happening? Safety is the most straightforward answer. Curiously there is no tailor-made legislation covering safety on playgrounds, nor a 'factory inspectorate' to enforce standards for new apparatus or oversee maintenance of old. Local authorities have no more than general liability. Naturally there are many accidents on playgrounds, but despite some studies nobody really knows how many, nor what would have happened to the same children if they had been playing in the kitchen or outside in the street. All that can be done is to minimise known hazards.

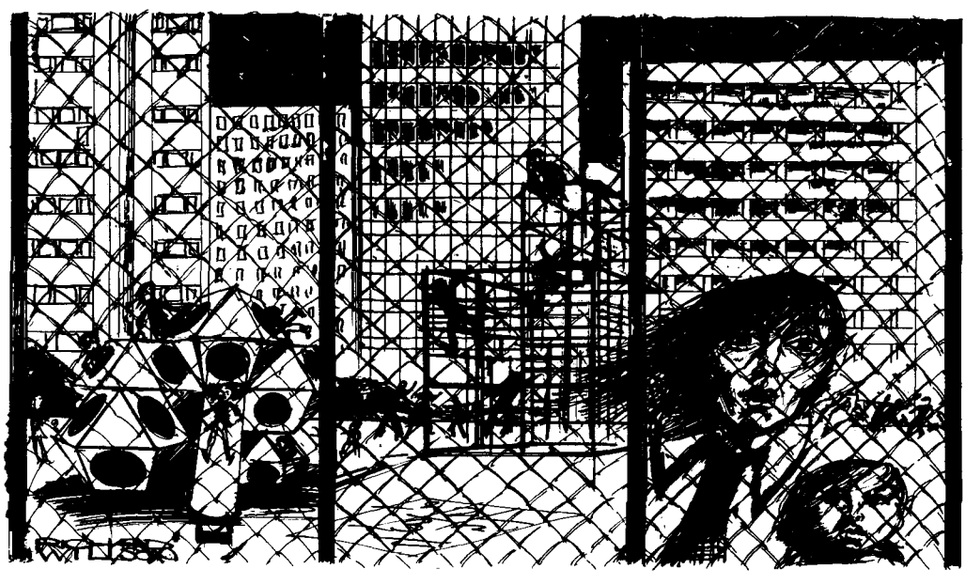
Litigiousness coupled with ever costlier insurance has increased the safety of many an American playground over the past 20 years. Here, as so often, consensus has ruled. Until recently expectations were pinned upon the long-awaited British Standard for playground equipment announced in February 1979. A British Standard compels neither the manufacturer to make a product in compliance with its specifications, nor the consumer to buy only such equipment, but in a market dominated by public authorities it is powerful. The manufacturers wanted a new standard because the old one limited the types of equipment they could design, while the consumers anticipated stricter rules for safety. In the event it is the safety lobby, headed by Fair Play for Children, that has been the more disappointed. Manufacturers dominated the Standards Committee, say Fair Play, and allowed old and potentially dangerous types of equipment to be perpetuated because they were easy and profitable to go on producing. They argue for a complete ban on plank swings, witch's hats and rocking horses, tighter control on other moving equipment and, above all, a much stronger obligation upon authorities to maintain playgrounds. Most problems arise not from new equipment but from old apparatus that has been either vandalised or left to deteriorate. Many accidents too occur because the commonest playground surfaces, concrete and tarmac, are those that need least maintenance. The safer sand, gravel, grass and even rubber require more attention.

Yet local authorities, while aware of the outcry over safety, have little money to spend just now on better maintenance or equipment. The results, especially in the middle of needful housing estates where vandalism is rife, are more and more sad little groups of padlocked roundabouts or swing chains dangling without their seats. So authorities are being increasingly urged to forget manufacturers' catalogues and install safer and vandal-proof equipment using cheaply available materials like sewer pipes, tyres and railway sleepers, in other words to learn from adventure playgrounds.

Though still few in number in Britain, adventure playgrounds are one of the international success stories of post-war recreation. The first example was the Emdrup 'waste material playground', conceived by a Danish landscape architect and laid out for a Copenhagen housing estate in 1943. Since then the idea has been taken up all over Europe and North America, in Britain chiefly through the enthusiasm of Marjorie Allen of Hurtwood for the many Scandinavian advances in playground design and equipment. But adventure playgrounds have drawbacks which prevent them from being universal models. They must be minutely designed, which detracts from savings gained from using junk materials, and they must be supervised all of the time, an expense unthinkable for ordinary small playgrounds. Above all adventure playgrounds are for older, chiefly pre-adolescent children once their appetites have outgrown, as they undoubtedly do, the charms of swings, slides and roundabouts.

It is upon such children that much of the lively modern philosophy of recreation is centred. One recent author (Colin Ward) interprets old-fashioned playgrounds as attempts to hem in free spirits within oppressive barriers and restrict the natural creativity of play to tame and artificial activities. (Another has even issued the slogan: 'Free the Children: Down with Playgrounds'.) The antics of a pair of 12-year-olds on a witch's hat may tempt one to agree. Yet four or five years earlier the same children probably spent happy hours on the traditional range of manufactured apparatus. That is the age-group that is probably suffering most from present trends, for it is to very small children that the static equipment, now increasingly found to be dominant in ordinary playgrounds, appeals most.

The demise of the old-style playground with its traditional fixed equipment provokes the question of how it evolved. Much is obscure on this point. Britain, despite its generous provision of municipal playgrounds today, was certainly backward at the outset in providing children with simple facilities for exercise. Samuel Wilderspin, the 'British Pestalozzi', advocated apparatus for school playgrounds as early as 1823 but was probably little heeded. In a graphic passage from his essays on education, Herbert Spencer in 1859 deplored the contrast between two school 'gardens' within sight of his study: the boys' school is 'supplied with poles and horizontal



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bars for gymnastic exercises' which are constantly in use, whereas the girls are confined to parading primly around the gravel walks. Far from the boys' facilities being improved or extended to the girls, they seem often actually to have disappeared in the later 19th century because of accidents.

Meanwhile by 1871 New York's Central Park had a playground with cumbersome huge wooden swings each seating an adult and a child. Nothing like this was available in Britain until Edwardian legislation encouraged sports, following the unhealthy state of the nation revealed in the aftermath of the Boer War.

Even then only schools, which after 1918 began to have reasonably well equipped playgrounds, were much affected. The ubiquity of the modern municipal playground dates only from the 1944 Education Act, which imposed a duty on local authorities to supply 'adequate facilities for recreation'.

As for the apparatus itself, its origins are even obscurer. For the age-old and frequently sensuous appeal of swings to all generations the paintings of Watteau or Fragonard are testimony enough. Many other devices probably derive from the fairground; in America some of the older toy horses in use seem still to bear that impress. In England, playground equipment appears to have been expressly manufactured only since the first world war, nearly always in iron and by firms with other engineering interests.

Such a firm was Charles Wicksteed and Company of Kettering, long this country's largest manufacturer of playground equipment. The firm slid into the business through its late Victorian founder's self-interested philanthropy. Having prospered from his small engineering works, which had concentrated upon agricultural machinery, Wicksteed decided in old age to build up a private park replete with amusements and recreational facilities for the town of Kettering. Constructed in the 1920s by his men, Wicksteed Park is a minor curiosity, once visited from miles around but rather forlorn now that the present-day youth of Northamptonshire has discovered more sophisticated pleasures. Still technically private, it boasts among its attractions a steamboat trip, a lakeside railway, a water chute and a sentimental statue of Wicksteed's dog. But the real oddity is a gigantic playground, possibly the largest in the country, bristling with swings, slides, roundabouts and the rest of the panoply of Wicksteed equipment. Here it was that Wicksteed evolved the characteristic heavy cast-iron apparatus upon which the British child has played for the last 50 years. Whether these were intended originally as prototypes or as one-off pieces cannot now be determined. But they soon became a vital part of Wicksteed's output as demand for playground equipment stepped up and the firm's machine-tool trade hit the slump. Some of these models are still in production, with little revision.

Today even in Wicksteed Park the old apparatus has been weeded for safety's sake. Instead, the modern firm has faithfully installed its various new climbing-frames; but their bright colours and space-age names hardly compensate for the loss of some old favourites. It will be sad if our preoccupation with the needs of safety and with the needs of the pre-adolescent child turns all such older, still-serviceable playgrounds into securer but duller places.

Television

Julian Barnes

Kiss & Croak

St Valentine's Day brought good and bad news for tsetse flies. The good news (and it's not *that* good) is that, according to *Tomorrow's World* (BBC-1), scientists have at last produced a tsetse fly aphrodisiac. This makes the male flies all drooly over anything – even a tiny chip of plastic – which has been doused in this hornifying pong. The bad news is that the same scientists are now going to start mixing the aphrodisiac with a sterilising drug. Very soon the tsetse fly population, like Nelson Rockefeller, will simply kiss and croak.

There was much kissing and croaking of a different sort in *Wildlife on One* (BBC-1), which came up with a remarkable film about fornicating frogs, tumbling toads and nooky-numbed newts. At times – as in a clip of a great swirling gangbang of male toads all rucking and mauling for the female in the middle – the parallel with human behaviour was all too wryly present. Male toads, by the way, are the only ones that croak; the females are voiceless. This fact assumes crucial importance during the courting season. When the male toad, whose peepers are none too sharp, perceives something vaguely toadish ahead, he simply leaps on top of it in a hopeful blur of randy blubber. If the landing strip lets forth a squeal, he gets off pretty smartish; if it remains silent, he clings on like billyo, deducing that he's commandeered a female. Unfortunately, his sight is so bad that this isn't always the case; in one poignant sequence we saw a silly old toad passionately embracing a thick piece of swamp-root and fighting off all-comers. Come to think of it, this wasn't devoid of its human parallels either . . .

Many people (perhaps most) still regard homosexuality as the rough equivalent of clinging dumbly to a bit of swamp root. The homosexual (like the feminist) cause has advanced sluggishly in most parts of the country; which is why there's a need for such programmes as *Gay Life* (LWT), and an equal need for them to be networked. It's just as important, though, that the show itself should decide where it's aiming: this week's edition – about drag acts and the leather scene – covered ground presumably already familiar to most London gays; and it can't have been intended merely as an educative..Open University slot for hets. But the first programme, about whether gays constitute security risks, had a much better focus, and turned up in its course a fine example of the civil service tails-you-lose ploy. If you are homosexual, the vetting boys rate you a security risk. Some

PREVIEWS AND OPENING AT LOW PRICES

New play by Philip Martin

THEE AND ME

60 years in the future : the sun has burnt through the ozone layer round the earth . . .

Cast : Kay Adshead, Gillian Barge, Ian Hogg, Mary Maddox, Leonard Maguire, Billy McColl, George Sweeney, Don Warrington

Director Michael Rudman, Designer Sue Plummer, Costumes Lindy Hemming, Lighting Gerry Jenkinson

LYTTELTON: Previews February 21, 22, 25 (all at 7.45), 23 (3.00 & 7.45) and Opening February 26 (7). Tickets £1.80 to £5.30

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homosexuals, faced with positive vetting, therefore decided to admit their sexual preference. By doing so, you'd think that they were automatically putting themselves beyond the possibility of being treated as blackmailable security risks; but no, the vetting officers duly treated the admissions as if they were objectively discovered evidence of unreliable character, and refused clearance. One vettee was even given the following choice: a) Go straight; b) Get a regular partner; or c) Accept demotion. Imagine a promiscuous heterosexual being instructed to turn gay.

On *Free to Choose* (BBC-2) Professor Milton Friedman was given a half-hour slot to himself before being taken on, in future programmes, by assorted experts headed by Peter Jay. They, doubtless, will make economics seem arcane and theoretical. Friedman's gift is to make it seem obvious and practical. This doesn't, of course, make his plausible market-place Darwinism necessarily near being right; but as a non-economist, one can understand the appeal to other, more influential non-economists of someone who takes such a cheery cornball approach to things. One minute Friedman shows us an illegal New York sweatshop where first-generation immigrants work hard for low pay in return for being 'given the chance to better themselves'; the next minute he shows us a second-generation Sicilian dentist decanting wine in his plush kitchen-diner. Simple, isn't it? Except, of course, that not all second generation immigrants *can* be dentists, can they?

Similarly, even those of us who aren't completely *au fait* with the economy of Hong Kong couldn't help catching a few whiffs of high-smelling rat during Friedman's account of this free-market paradise. First, when the Professor talked rather grandly of the 'freedom' of the workers here to move to other jobs, he somehow neglected to mention the employers' somewhat more extensive 'freedom' to sack all of them summarily. Later, when he showed some skilled wood-carvers *working in very cramped conditions*, he remarked that the workers 'could take less and induce their employers to make their working conditions better' – but that they had used their freedom and chosen not to ask for such improvements, preferring extra money in their pockets instead. (They would, wouldn't they? No one *chooses* to have his pay docked in order to strengthen the fire escape; still less when he has 27 aunts and uncles to support.)

A similar brutal Darwinism was on display during most of the England-Wales rugby international (*Grandstand* BBC-1), which proved much too tense and nasty to be enjoyable. England deserved to win, not for any merit in their play, but because they didn't attempt to maim their opponents. Paul Ringer, in this column's opinion, shouldn't have been sent off when he was; he should have been sent off after three minutes, for putting a high-speed knee into the back of the already prostrate Hare. But then this column would also have sent off two other members of the Taffia – Wheel for kicking Uttley in the face, and Holmes for trying to decapitate Scott at a ruck. Since the present scoring system (all Welshmen will declare) is unjust, here is a new one: for every stitch inserted after the match, the team scores one point. Result England 17pts (Uttley 10, Smith 3, Beaumont 2, Scott 2), Wales 6pts (Phillips 6). Fair?

Art

John Spurling

What Do They Mean?

Abstraction: Towards a New Art *Tate*

If only the Royal Academy's *Post-Impressionism* had been more like the Tate's *Abstraction*! Of course the period covered in *Post-Impressionism* is much longer – the Tate has confined itself to abstraction's beginnings, 1910-20 – and the concept is perhaps a more difficult one, but I suspect that if the two teams of organisers had changed places, our view of Post-Impressionism would have been wonderfully clarified and refreshed instead of reduced to greater confusion than before. *Abstraction* is laid out geographically rather than chronologically, with a central room devoted to artists working in Paris and around it rooms for the Americans, Russians, Dutch, British, Italians and Swiss. There is also an antechamber containing Cubist work by Braque, Picasso and Gris, since it was out of Cubism that so much of Abstraction came, including Malevich's and Mondrian's, though not Kandinsky's.

But in spite of having Paris at its centre, the show conclusively demonstrates how ultimately sterile Parisian abstraction was. Cubism, as Peter Vergo points out in his admirable introduction to the catalogue, 'remained rooted in external reality . . . fairly close to the realities of perception' and those painters who stayed in the shadow of Braque and Picasso, though they may have flirted briefly with Abstraction, never discovered much more than its pretty face. Picabia, the two Delaunays and the Americans made colourful, decorative paintings; Leger and Duchamp turned bodies into machines and machines into bodies; Kupka hovered between the decorative and the dynamic. All in one way or another were involved with varieties of perception, with styles intended to capture and convey what they saw in the real world rather than with what Delaunay called 'a change of understanding'.

The same might be said of the Netherlands contingent, as well as the Futurists and Vorticists. There is a fascinating sequence – the exhibition is rich in such sequences – of drawings and paintings by Bart Van Der Leck, which starts with some Arabs on donkeys and ends, by a process of stylisation and erasure, with nothing but a pattern of coloured slats. Both the Futurists and Vorticists were after the purely material dynamism of modern technology, even if with an ideological tinge (this is how the modern world ought to be).

When you come down to it – which this show most decidedly does – Abstraction 1910-20 rests as squarely on the shoulders of three artists as Post-Impressionism does on those of four. Pay your respects to art-history, admire the wealth and variety of experimenters and aestheticians the Tate has assembled for your inspection, but keep your energy for Malevich, Mondrian and Kandinsky. The difference between their brands of abstraction and almost everyone else's at this time is that they were concerned with meaning rather than simple perception. They were the true heirs of the Symbolist and Expressionist strands in Post-Impressionism. Mondrian set out to express 'pure reality'; Kandinsky to communicate 'events of an inner character'; Malevich to achieve 'pure creation in art'.

Malevich did not so much develop as jump from Cubism to Suprematism. Even when one can examine the before and after as meticulously as in this show there remains an unbridged gap between the collage-style *Woman at the Poster Column* of 1914 and the first Suprematist drawings of black geometrical shapes on a white ground. The sequence of his work displayed here begins with the monumental *Morning in the Village After Snowfall* (1913), in which drifts of snow curl up like solid breakers and two tubular, robot-like women in conical hats and carrying pails walk between crazily Cubist cottages. Yet the blue and red lights that play over the surfaces give the whole scene an atmosphere, a crisp sense of early morning exhilaration, quite foreign to the more mundane concerns of the true Cubists. It is astonishing to think in retrospect that Malevich did not rest on this picture, that having found such a powerful mode of expression he did not simply, like Leger, explore it and make it his own. True, the roofs and the lines of the hills in the background have something of the dynamic set of Suprematism; but is it possible that so much solid earthiness, even if mixed with a tendency to express feelings, should be swept away in less than two years to leave a few two-dimensional spars and planks floating, like the debris from a shipwreck or an explosion, in plain white space? Malevich's Suprematist statements have a calmly maniacal tone, more alarming than the frenzied aggressiveness of the Futurists and Vorticists. It is the tone of an all-powerful god come to sweep away the known supports of the world rather than that of a group of men dedicated to mere temporal revolution. The truth is that, at least in his role as painter, Malevich did see himself as the supreme originator, plunging the whole history of art into one black square and then beginning again, on a canvas representing infinity, with the pure creation of shape, colour and movement.

Mondrian's development was much less sudden. The drawings of beaches give way to a stylised *Pier and Ocean* and that in turn to an

For your information

The Arts Council is holding a public forum on its policy for literature at 6pm on Tuesday 11 March at its offices at 105 Piccadilly. The Chairman of the Literature Panel, Melvyn Bragg, and the Literature Director, Charles Osborne, will answer questions on the Arts Council and what it does for literature. Tickets for the meeting can be obtained from Sue Rose, the Press Officer, Arts Council, 105 Piccadilly, London W1V 0AU.

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abstract grey oval filled with lines like little pins, laid strictly horizontally or vertically; drawings of buildings in Paris flatten into complex jigsaws of blue, pink and ochre facets; at last the basis in perceived reality drops away and we arrive via two great checkerboards at the first fully mature Mondrian, the Tate's own *Composition in Grey, Red, Yellow and Blue*, of 1920. It seems a far cry from that huge, emotional *Dunelandscape* of 1910 which hangs, violently blue, pink and purple, on the adjacent wall. Mondrian's purpose, though no less ambitious than Malevich's in effect – they both remade the visible world – was humbler and more peaceable in conception. He meant to see through the reality of appearance to an ideal reality beyond. The lurid colours of *Dunelandscape*, the contorted forms of his early trees express both this fear of immediate reality and his awe of what might lie behind it. They are crude, striving, lumpish pictures. Suddenly, retiring to the basic simplicities of his means – horizontal or vertical lines, grey or white grounds, variations on the three primary colours – he loses his fear and converts his awe into geometry. Geometry and pure colour: is that all there is to it? Why does Mondrian have meaning, when Van Der Leck and Van Doesburg in the next room so evidently do not? One might as well ask why 'Chinese' Gordon's blue eyes mesmerised people when the blue eyes of his contemporaries did not. Mondrian's intensity comes, of course, from his structure, but the intensity that made the structure comes from his sense of its meaning, as a pure form, an ideal experience built out of nothing but essentials. The meaning of Mondrian's yellow is not so different from that of Van Gogh's sunflower, but it reaches you from behind instead of from in front.

On a slightly wandering bee-line between the harmonious ground-plans of Mondrian and the cosmic apparitions of Malevich you will find four walls of Kandinskys. Phaidon have fortunately chosen this month to publish a useful study of the artist by Hans Roethel (£22), somewhat clumsily written but indispensable, especially for its colour plates, to anyone hooked on these addictive paintings. Kandinsky is really a romantic history-painter, the Delacroix of the 20th century. His early work, influenced above all, Roethel suggests, by Arnold (*Island of the Dead*) Böcklin, is full of mediaeval knights and ladies, white chargers, idyllic landscapes and fairy-tale colours. One key early work, *Motley Life* (1907) (excluded from the show by its date) assembles a whole gallery of Russian mediaeval characters in a meadow below a white castle on a wooded knoll. The Tate introduces us to Kandinsky's characteristic subject-matter with three of his 1911 *All Saints' Day* compositions, in which the saints are mostly still visible in their boat, though beginning to become, in the largest, very much tossed about. Kandinsky advanced into abstraction with great caution and misgiving, afraid that if the object were finally lost the audience would be too. To his own eyes none of the paintings in this show, except the 1913 colour studies, can have looked wholly abstract, since they still contain the hieroglyphs of horses and riders, the remnants of castles and landscapes, even the white spear of St George (though both saint and dragon have dissolved into swirling colour). For him these were narrative paintings, apocalypses, dreams, battles, scenes of motley life; for the spectator they can only be actions of line and colour, with occasional glimpses, as one feels one's way into his world, of the characters and objects involved in those actions. Kandinsky wrote that 'Böcklin explored the domain of myths and fairy tales by clothing his abstract ideas in strongly material and massive bodies'. He himself discovered that in order to convey the spirit of human history the material bodies were not only irrelevant but actual hindrances, making static and 'period' what should be dynamic and dateless. Kandinsky went one better than Wagner: he got rid of the staging.

Theatre

Benedict Nightingale

Time-Warps

Country Life by CARLO GOLDONI *Lyric, Hammersmith*
The Weavers by GERHART HAUPTMANN *Round House*
Duet for One by TOM KEMPINSKI *Bush*

Ours is an insular theatre. In 11 years on the NS I've had occasion to review Goldoni only once – when his *Campiello* visibly bored the Queen to near-stupefaction at the National's official opening – and Hauptmann not at all. So the week looked promising, even important. Gaps would be filled, the long wait rewarded, a glimmer of enlightenment achieved. Was the mild disappointment that, as it turned out, many of us felt as we stumbled from each revival the fault of the authors, actors, directors, or, perhaps, our own irredeemable cultural chauvinism?

A combination, perhaps. The strength of Goldoni is his scope, and his scope is also his limitation. Unlike Molière, who preferred to concentrate on one exemplary oddball, he presents us with a society at work or, as in the case of the trilogy he actually called *Country Holidays,* at play. Look: two young women playing a dainty game of oneupmanship, each trying to prove herself the more fashionable yet the more contemptuous of fashion. Listen: carriages of various styles and statuses being called for, cancelled, called for again. Look: hot chocolate drunk in mid-morning, cards played just before lunch, and other domestic minutiae ritually indulged. Look: servants being abused, chatted up, then touched for a loan. Listen carefully: creditors in the next street, bailiffs in the anteroom, making gainful marriage an economic obligation. It is like being time-warped back to 1761, and conducted round the haute-bourgeoisie by a guide whose sharp eye and ear for detail sometimes gets the better of a sensible schedule. Who would not have ditched a sub-sub-plot involving a comically naïve medical student and the women homing possessively in upon him?

Well, Robert David Macdonald wouldn't, and didn't. His adaptation, for better and for worse, is prolix. It is also somewhat anachronistic, with one character told he 'couldn't do a one-piece jigsaw', another described as a 'very neurotic girl indeed', and so on; and this trait is doubly disconcerting, because the play's attitudes are as much of its period as its costumes. For instance, we don't laugh as easily as our forebears at the sight of a fop sponging off an emotionally helpless old woman. Indeed, this time we don't laugh at all, because Peter Eyre plays the leech slyly, petulantly, without any comic exaggeration whatever, and Ellen Pollock brings a fluttering pathos to the part of his victim. Nor are we inclined to applaud when Julia Foster's vivid, determined young heiress renounces her true passion and marries the suitor whom honour, reputation, maidenly decorum and her own premature promises all dictate she must. Goldoni approvingly shows the values of the 18th century triumphing over those about to be sanctified by the 19th century; and we can only boggle from the 20th-century twilight at an ending that will still strike many of us as unhappy, perhaps immoral.

Nevertheless, the result is undeniably interesting, and would be more so if all the performers matched those I've mentioned. Alas, David Giles's cast too often lacks variety, subtlety, nuance: commodities, as it turns out, even less apparent uptown at the Round House. Partly, this is because of the nature of *The Weavers,* which is epic in its sweep and socialist in its sympathies. Hauptmann shows his characters hopelessly cadging a few pennies from a stony company cashier, killing pets they cannot affort to feed, vomiting up food too rich for their deprived stomachs, watching their children pine, and, finally, rioting across the Silesia of 1844; but he is more interested in the sum than the parts, in his ragged-trousered army as a whole than the individuals who constitute it. Indeed, he elevates his starving weavers into a sort of collective Promethean hero, pluckily battling against social powers they may dent, but cannot hope to destroy. It is an attempt, the first in theatrical history, to create something akin to tragedy from the conflict of class with class.

The danger, monotony, is avoided neither by performers who can't lament the lack of chicken soup without rising to the same bleak histrionic wail, nor by a production whose forte is spectacle, not human detail. The director is Paul Marcus, son of Frank, who himself has contributed the spare, deft translation; and his response to the challenge of staging a hyper-naturalistic play in the centre of a retired loco shed has the audacity usually associated with Victor Garcia. Sack-clothed figures creep up walkways, huddle in the well beneath them, ride down rails in a tiny truck, sometimes to eccentric effects from the lighting console. The result can look good, and, unsurprisingly, can also look inappropriate and awkward: just which of the assembled thespians (I kept wondering) would be the first to trip, tumble, and break his back? As rediscovery goes, it is a start; but it's clear that the British theatre has as much hard work still to do on Hauptmann as on Goldoni before either can take his place in its regular repertoire.

Plays set on or near psychiatrists' couches can have rather the same fascination as those in courtrooms: truths are to be sleuthed out, lies exposed, blame apportioned, yet doubts left to hang in the purifying air, and all with the maximum of tension. So it proves at the Bush, where the patient is a crippled violinist, her mentor a man of such awesome sensitivity, subtlety and self-effacing integrity that I, for one, was tempted to put down a deposit for his services then and there. It is suspiciously good

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publicity for the Psychotherapy Centre and the Institute of Psychoanalysis, both of which are duly credited in the programme; yet it is feelingly characterised and skilfully assembled, and I could spot no obvious flaw in its case-notes.

It's also very well acted by David de Keyser, a shrink who reconciles diffidence and authority in one pouchy persona, and Frances de la Tour, a victim who has evidently decided that the best defence is 51 varieties of offence. She is alternately brittle and scathing, cynical and grieving, outrageously false and painfully true; and her ending, quite rightly, is no ending at all, but another stop-off on what will evidently be a long and circuitous mental trek. It's a mark of the potency of both play and performers that most of the audience looked as if they'd willingly stay and see it through.

Films

John Coleman

Random Harvest

Messidor (X) *Academy Two*
The Custard Boys *ICA, 1-2 March*
Female Trouble *Scala*

George Hoellering, who died on 10 February, was 82 and yet one's immediate reaction was incredulity. An all-weather friend, he had seemed a benign force of nature, courteously eternal. Now the official obits have been written and there has been time for a sense of loss to supervene. One of my happiest memories of this Austrian-born gentleman of the cinema (and cinemas), who produced Brecht's *Kuhle Wampe* (1932) in Berlin and was later to direct *Murder in the Cathedral* (1951) for the screen, arose out of his stay in Hungary during the Thirties when his anti-Nazi views led him to leave Germany. Between 1934-35 he had made a poetic documentary, *Hortobagy*, drawing on the lives of the herdsmen of the great Hungarian plain. In 1967 I was lucky enough to be of his party when he returned to the scene of his creation. Before the showing of the film itself – a lost work in its native land – in the large provincial town of Debrecen, we had driven bumpily out, under a sky like a great, grey lid, to the original site; Miklos Jancso was there to toast George at a nearby white-walled inn, as was Jancsi, 15 in the Hoellering film, now burly and shy, a big man at the folk museum across the way. Hungarian film folk turned out in force for the triumphant screening and there was bemused talk of their cinema histories needing to be re-written. Best of all, the girl Juliska of *Hortobagy*, in her element more than 30 years on, skittishly reproached Uncle Yuri (George) for making her look so *old*. As for the present, there is the legacy of the three 'art'-houses in Oxford Street, surely secure under the sensitive control of Ivo Jarosy. *Si monumentum requiris, circumspice*.

As one who tends to switch off the ignition at the mention of 'road-movies', a reaction first engendered by an overdose of the Wim Wenders and lately, massively, reinforced by that British stretch of ennui with a white line down the middle, *Radio On*, I was more than pleased to find Alain Tanner's *Messidor* so unremittingly alive and interesting. But then this Swiss film-maker's track record, from *La Salamandre* to *Jonah Who Will Be 25 in the Year 2000*, was already there to allay premonitory qualms. After the richness and complexity of *Jonah*, though, yet another of those wonderfully fruitful script collaborations with John Berger, the new film sounded dangerously spare: no Berger, the merest outline of a 'story', improvisation – both of dialogue and *mise en scène* – to be the order of the day. Furthermore, two young girls with little experience of acting for the camera were to carry the brunt of the action, which would move 'all over Switzerland, with three-quarters of it being shot on the German side'. Certainly, there is a lot of Switzerland, looked at rather aloofly, quantities of landscapes from snowy hillsides to night forests, and there are moments when the zigzagging journey becomes wearisome, or threatens to. That it never quite does is the achievement of the director and his chosen duo.

Jeanne (Clémentine Amouroux) is 19, a blonde-cropped, bespectacled history student, who decides to hitch into the countryside from Lausanne for a few days' respite from books and the city. Marie (Catherine Rétoré), a year younger, is a dark-haired country girl, a sales assistant, who decides to thumb her way home when she loses her train ticket. Neither is beautiful, both are attractive: they prove perfect complements. Joining forces by chance, they soon enjoy each other's company enough to protract their wanderings. Marie clobbers a would-be rapist with a rock, as he and his pal assault Jeanne. Down to just ten francs, they make the wilful decision: either to act reasonably or to play a game. The game wins. A gun, casually nicked from an army officer on the road, is as casually kept: as protection. It rapidly makes itself useful, delicately held (not *pointed*) by Marie as the girls walk from a village store without paying: then again, as a farmer threatens them after a clandestine night spent in his cowshed (Jeanne has already settled on their false names – Clio and Thalia Messidor, the surname being the harvest month in the old Revolutionary calendar – and repeats them here); then repeatedly, the very threat of it increasing their feeling of being threatened, until a culminating disaster, the outcome of a misapprehension.

Jauntiness gradually sours, after Marie's early amusement at Jeanne's fear of wild animals, yet may recur at any time as their complicity grows (they may even be lovers: there is more than a hint); near-starving, they hysterically break stolen eggs over their heads, getting the giggles. A TV programme – based on an actual German-speaking show called *XY* – reconstructs their first crimes and makes their faces known. A few men and women randomly encountered prove briefly helpful, as if they too took pleasure in bucking the official system, the prevalent up-tight morality, but the girls' optimistic belief they can eat in restaurants and wash dishes as recompense belongs to another era, life is no longer like that, they discover. 'Madame Pipi' and 'Madame Casa', as Jeanne introduces the pair of them to a sanctimonious motorist (not above implying money might be forthcoming for favours rendered), inevitably founder in their scatty bid for an illusory freedom. Their fun was tainted from the first by a near-certainty it would have, in the end, to be paid for. It is a sad, gleeful, fascinating, doomed trip, picking up ironic shape and purpose the longer it goes on and, literally, one in the eye for those prepared to find esoteric and timely messages about man's alienation and that in the humdrum run of the road-movies.

The ICA's Children's Cinema Club, operating at 3 p.m. on Saturday and Sunday afternoons and now in its third month, is a venture to be encouraged. During March, two features and a bunch of shorts produced by the flourishing film unit run by Colin Finbow at the Forest Hill Comprehensive School will be on show. *The Custard Boys* is the latest product of this Unit's ten-year existence. Drawn, like Philip Leacock's 1961 *Reach for Glory*, from John Rae's highly praised novel about evacuee schoolkids' cruelty being fatally fuelled by injunctions to heroism during World War II, it has two very good performances where it matters (from Tony Collins as the decent lad with a militarist father and from Eric Milliet as the Austrian-Jewish refugee boy he is invited to take under his protection); it is also closer to the original novel – intimations of homosexuality, for instance – and Mr Rae himself appears as a martial vicar almost out of World War I. Elsewhere, the acting is pretty horrendous, amateur night – notably – by the grown-ups. But even Leacock's film, with Harry Andrews and Kay Walsh as the tormented leading boy's parents, fell down on the adults' lines. *Female Trouble* is an experience: so, they tell me, is tertiary syphilis.

Opera

Peter Conrad

Young Sorrows

Werther *Covent Garden*
Werther *DGG* £15.17
Werther *EMI* £13.95
Otello *Covent Garden*

Last year, with Alfredo Kraus as an ageing roué and Viorica Cortez as a marauding suburban housewife, Covent Garden's *Werther* appeared to be about middle-aged adultery. This time around, by casting José Carreras and Frederica von Stade, the company has restored the work to the teenagers, to the emotional ferocity of youth. The Werther of Carreras is an adolescent, socially diffident yet emotionally exorbitant. His singing is healthy and forthright, with none of those excursions into falsetto by means of which other tenors suggest the character's sickliness. A pouter-pigeon's imposing girth is beginning to puff up the diminutive Carreras, but the slight air of pomposity this gives him suits his version of the character. Inexperience inclines Werther to obsessive seriousness and self-destructive overstatement: when Charlotte flees from his unfair demands on her, he at once vows to die.

Childishness makes Frederica von Stade's Charlotte shy of his passion. While he rages at her ecstatically, she remains untouched, immured in her mourning for her mother. Her

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characterisation is beautifully judged: she hesitates between awkward reticence and romping eagerness before taking Werther's arm, and on their return from the ball nervously evades his advances. Her initial uncertainty grows later into hysteria, as she's stretched between fear of the man's allure and guilt at her rejection of him. Von Stade's voice is fresh and youthful, yet has tears in it, and can sound grave, weighty, grief-stricken. This combination of opposite qualities exactly suits the work, which, as Goethe's title points out, is about the inordinate and unnecessary sorrows of youth.

Colin Davis conducts forcefully, welding Massenet's melodic spasms together. While he and the Covent Garden cast are taping their *Werther*, two rival recordings have been issued. DGG's, conducted by Riccardo Chailly, is explosively Italianate. Placido Domingo's Werther is no moody northern introvert but an impulsive southerner, maddened by erotic frustration, alternating between outbursts of violent complaint and morbid etherealisation of tone. Elena Obraztsova matches him in intensity. She's a spitfire, impatient with the demure domestic restraints imposed on Charlotte. The timbre of the voice is baleful, visceral: Obraztsova's 'Air des larmes' is less a sentimental lament than a heroic threnody.

The EMI set has the proper Gallic credentials – a French supporting cast, and a conductor (Michel Plasson) who emphasises grace and lyrical composure not, like Chailly, eruptive ardour. His principals are likewise subdued. Alfredo Kraus is not a convulsive vocal volcano like Domingo. His Werther is still living in the 18th century: elegant, polite, diplomatic (for this is after all the career on which Goethe's hero had embarked). He understands and regrets Charlotte's dismissal of him at the church, but doesn't bellow in protest as Domingo does. Kraus's partner, Tatiana Troyanos, is correspondingly tender, gentle, tremulous. Her voice quavers with suppressed sympathy as she utters Werther's name when opening his letters. Taken slowly and softly, this episode is in her delivery of it a troubled, helpless soliloquy, not the crisis of dramatic agitation into which Obraztsova's performance inflates it. The choice between recordings depends on your preconceptions. If you think of *Werther* as a perfumed French delicacy, EMI is the one; if you hear in it aphrodisiac reminiscences of Wagner and Italian verismo, DGG will satisfy you.

At Covent Garden, Domingo has been on view as Otello. Conducted by Carlos Kleiber with galvanic energy and dictatorial accuracy, it's a stunning performance. Domingo surpasses himself: conquest of this role has somehow matured and ennobled him. This Otello is rigidly upright, straitjacketed inside his military propriety, unmanned by Desdemona's infidelity because it deprives him of his sustaining self-respect. Domingo begins by showing Otello as a warrior, restaging old battles during the love-duet, and as a bureaucrat, working through despatches during his dialogue with Iago. But this hieratic, commanding creature has himself been overmastered by Desdemona. Betrayed by her, he steadies and sedates himself by busying himself with routine; exterminating her, he prepares for the murder as for a military rite, ceremonially disrobing to pray and implacably ordering her to do the same. He regains his stern rectitude and self-control in sentencing himself to death. Before that, his suspicion (as he paces the stage in a panic of doubt) and his sobbing dismay are terrifying to behold.

To this histrionic danger Domingo adds an absolute musical assurance. Baritonally solid, his voice never falters into that tortured *parlando* on which lesser Otellos have to rely. But as well as the exultant trumpet-tones, he demonstrates how lyrical a role it is, with his lullaby-like farewell to martial glory. *'Spento è quel sol'*, or the patient surrender of his scimitar, *'Niun mi tema'*. Domingo's ubiquity and his inexhaustibility incline us to take him for granted: this Otello reminds us how great a singer, and how intelligent an artist, he is.

Weekend Competition

No 2605 **Set by Jeff Squiffy**

Time for a re-run of the evergreen 'happy families' comp. If Judith Hart could have married Sickert, would she have been known as Judith Sickert-Hart? If Sam Wanamaker had married Bessie Love, would he be known as Sam Wanamaker-Love? More in the same vein please, by 7 March.

No 2602 **Set by Catherine Rushton**

Companions of the famous spill the beans to the popular press.

Report **By Frank Khashoggistraw**

We may not have the resources of the *N**s of the W***d*, but the NS's commitment to chequebook journalism extends as far as seven quid each for Yorke's Mussolini, Greenwell's Boadicea, Fitton's Caesar, Ransome-Davies's Adam and Towling's E. M. Forster.

Benito was always a very rigid time-keeper. 'Carissima,' he would say to me, laying his stop-watch on the bedside table, 'tonight we are going to commence at 10.37 precisely, and we are going to finish at 10.39 and 30 seconds.' If I was late he would give me such a spanking!

That was in the early days. He had a lot of things on his mind later. I would have to cajole him. 'Benny,' I would say, 'why don't we try a long run tonight, you know, stopping at all stations sort of thing?' But he would just stare moodily out of the window fingering his timetable and muttering something like 'punctuality is the secret of success.' He never told me what it meant, but he always came on time, sometimes a little too early for my liking.

JIM YORKE

Our marriage – her second, my first – was secret. She preferred me to old Prasutagus. Wasn't the chap to trust Nero, myself. Bugger fiddled the books. We chaps button our public lip. But she blubbed on my shoulder. My true-blue Boadicea – or Boadi-woadi, as I called her (used to chinwag down at the local, 'Boadi – never cea!' used to tickle the customers before she started calling herself Boudicca) – couldn't handle chariots. Used to say 'Only women reigning Norfolk can't rein horses'. Designed the wheel-scythes myself. Got no credit. Did it to improve my gardening, cut down brambles, not soldiers. She used to *drink* the woad – that's why she screamed so fiercely. Put the willies up Paulinus. Bad show after Fenny Stratford; returned to Dunroman, swigged a bucketful. Poison? Tommyrot. Overdose of woad. Horrible. But, as we say in Norfolk, Iceni was all right. Eh? Statue's a good likeliness, though. Damgood.

BILL GREENWELL

Oh no, dear – his having the hots for Tony didn't bug me one bit – rather a relief actually – not everyone knows this but with JC it was a case of *'Vici, Veni, VD'* . . . Then there was that filthy muck he kept rubbing on his bonce for the baldness – stank the place out. Not to mention those laurel-wreaths dropping all over my lovely new loggia. Then there was his everlasting dithering – *'Shall* I go the Capitol?' – *'Shan't* I go to the Capitol?' – 'It's make-your-mind-up-time' I kept telling him – but would he listen? Not on your Aphrodite! But it was the jokes that finished me – 'The entrails look pretty offal today – I mean, I *ask* you' . . . So I decided – absolutely *forbid* him to go – because that was the only way to make sure the stubborn old sod actually *went* . . . Oh yes, I was *in* on it, love – didn't you twig?

MOLLY FITTON

People talk about Paradise. They don't know the half of it. Oh I admit the garden was nice, but it took a lot more keeping up than the lawn and borders of your average semi. Then there was Adam. Don't get me wrong, I'm not knocking what we had together, but he wasn't exactly the last of the red-hot lovers. Believe me, I didn't have to plead a headache. It was work all the time with him. He used to claim someone had told him he would 'eat bread in the sweat of his brow', as though he was under a curse. That's how the snake rumours started. Everyone's heard the story, but they've got it all wrong. There was nothing kinky about it. I've always been fond of animals, and I wasn't getting much companionship from my husband. The only thing he got fruity about was his apple-tree. Then there were the kids. That's something else they've all got wrong. Cain wasn't a bad boy, but where could he go in the evenings?

BASIL RANSOME-DAVIES

Well, you could have knocked me down with your rhythm stick when I heard that Morgan le Gay was a famous *writer*. 1934 it must have been – spring – and there I was, pounding along the Chelsea Embankment when I heard this funny, reedy little voice coming out of the darkness. 'A fair cop' it said. 'What's all this then?' I says, automatic-like, thinking it was some villain what wanted to cough. 'A fair cop,' he says again, 'and I rather like fair cops.' (It was true – lovely golden thatch I had in them days.) 'So you would, would yer?' I says, sharpish-like, 'cos I knew what *he* was after . . . But, well, it was a soft night – he seemed an 'armless little feller – and a lot of us lads is a bit AC/DC if you can only connect . . . Saw a lot of 'im after that – generous bloke he were, very kind, very gentle – but why he always called it exploring my Marabar Cave I shall *never* know . . .

TERRY TOWLING

Tony Miles

Chess

Problem 168 **October and November Problems**

The October problem competition was rather decimated by the efficiency of the Brazilian postal service – apparently sending something express from that part of the world just means that they spill coffee on it – so I have decided to amalgamate it with the November set, allocating prizes as fairly as possible

Problem 151 (r4rlk/pplq2pp/2p2nnl/2Q5/3Ppp2/2N1P3/PP2BPPP/4RRK1) came from Stean – Sax Amsterdam '79. Black concluded neatly with 1 . . . P-B6; 2.PxP (of course 2.B-Q1, Q-N5 forces mate), Q-R6! (Not so clear, though, is . . . PxP; 3.BxP and (a) . . . Q-R6; 4.B-N2 or (b) . . . N-R5; 4.B-Q1, Q-R6; 5.Q-KN5 or, imaginatively, . . . N-Q4; 4.NxN, R-B6 – hoping for 5.BxR, NxBch; 6.K-N2, Q-N5ch; 7.K-R1, Q-R6 winning,

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but . . . – 5.N-B4!) 3.NxP (if 3.P-B4, N-N5; 4.BxN, QxBch; 5.K-R1, R-B4; 6.P-B3 – only try – PxP; 7.R-KN1, P-B7! wins, or 3.PxP, N-N5; 4.BxN, QxBch; 5.K-R1; N-R5 mates quickly), N-N5! (Alternatively . . . NxN; 4.PxN, N-R5; 5.Q-N5, R-B3; 6.B-R5, R-N3!) 4.Q-Q6, N-B5! Resigns.

Problem 152 (8/1p2k2p/8/P4K2/8/7P/8/8) was, as a few readers recognised, an endgame study by Jon Speelman. The point is that the obvious 1.K-K5 fails to . . . K-Q2! and if 2.K-B6, K-B3; 3.K-N7, K-N4 and Black draws. Thus White must first get his pawn to R4 and then regain the opposition. This is accomplished neatly by 1.K-N5! K-B2 (now K-Q2 loses); 2.K-R6, K-N1; 3.P-R4! K-R1; 4.K-R5! (The point – Black must move his K to the N file first – not 4.K-N5? K-N2!) . . . K-N1; 5.K-N4! K-B1; 6.K-B4, K-K1; 7.K-N5! (but not K-K4? K-Q2!), K-B2; 8.K-B5, K-K2; 9.K-K5, K-Q2 (or . . . K-B2; 10.K-Q6); 10.K-B6, K-B3; 11.K-N7, K-N4 (P-R4 makes no difference); 12.KxP, KxP; 13.P-R5, P-N4; 14.P-R6, P-N5; 15.K-N7! (but not K-N6 or N8), P-N6; 16.P-R7, P-N7; 17.P-R8=Q, P-N8=Q; 18.Q-R8ch, K any; 19.Q-N8ch and 20.QxQ wins. There were two common errors in solutions. The first was to advance the KRP to R6 when Black draws by giving up his own RP, meeting KxRP by K-B2. The second was essentially 1.P-R4, K-B2; 2.P-R5 when P-R3! draws.

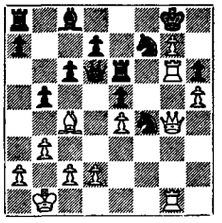
Problem 153 was straightforward, as were **156** and **157**, though the latter netted a few victims!

Problem 155 (3K4/1b5p/pR6/P1pP4/Nr5p/1P5P/6P1/6K1) was the adjourned position from the crucial last round game Timman – Garcia from the Rio de Janeiro Interzonal. Black sealed 1 . . . RxR and after 2.PxR, BxP; 3.NxP, P-QR4! 4.K-B2, K-B1; 5.P-N3 (the only try to make progress), PxPch; 6.KxP, forced a draw by 6 . . . BxP! 7.NxB, P-R5; 8.N-B1, K-N2 and White has no chances. If he goes to the K-side, Black queens his QRP in time, whilst if he heads the other way, Black picks up the KRP. The only question is whether Black has an alternative to 6 . . . BxP! If he 'passes' indefinitely, White will win by advancing his P to R6, bringing his K to QR3, playing P-N4, exchanging Ps, returning the K to KN7 and then taking the RP with his N and queening just in time. However, Black can cross this plan with a timely . . . P-KR4! when I have not found a clear winning plan for White. This idea, therefore, also gained credit, but naturally 6 . . . BxP! is much more clean cut.

Problem 154 was complicated and I will deal with it next week. Prizes from the October-November competitions: Messrs Deshmukh, Ghate, James, Sahasrabudhe and Taylor £15 each; Mr Cornforth £12, Mr Kastanas £10 and Mr McSheehy £3.

Problem 168

White to play. How should the game go? Answers to me at the NEW STATESMAN postmarked no later than 5 March.



Solution to problem 165

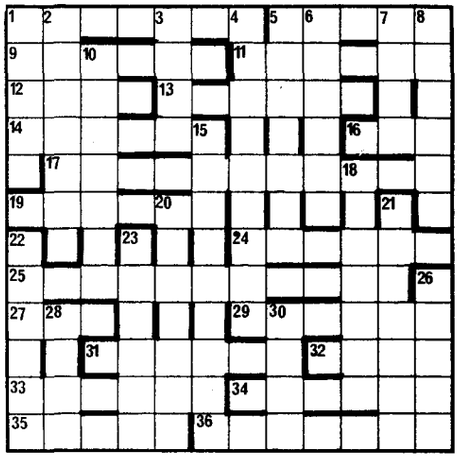
1. N-N5! PxN (if B-Q1, B-B4); 2.BxPch, K-B1; 3.B-R6ch, K-N1; 4.B-QB4, resigns.

Solution to problem 166

1 . . . P-B5!! 2.BxP (PxP, R-QN1), R-QB1 (threatening . . . RxB; 4.PxR, P-N6; 5.PxP, P-R6); 3.B-Q3, P-R6! 4.N-B2 (!) R-B8; 5.P-R4! R-QR8; 6.B-B4, RxP; 7.N-Q3, R-B7ch; 8.KxR, P-R7; 9.NxP, P-R8=Q; 10.N-Q3! and White sets up a defensive fortress with N on KB4 and B on KN2, drawing.

Salamanca 27: 'Littery'

PRIZES: Book tokens of £2 for the first three correct solutions opened. Entries to Salamanca 27, New Statesman, Great Turnstile, London WC1V 7HJ, by first post 4 March.



Asterisked clues refer in part or total to a specific literary theme.

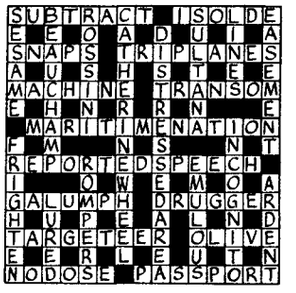
ACROSS

*1 See 34.
*5 Did this bounder jar on one? (5)
9 It's slightly wavy about wash day (6)
*11 Bring on measure for finding what 14 'lost', late in being made up for (6)
12 Rather astounding times had therein (4)
13 On iron, standing around, poor feet are exhausted (6)
*14 Pessimist with a sorry tale, we hear (6)
*16 He constitutes 5's brood, carried within (3)
*17 Will 29's grandfather with first step proceed in wood without right? (11)
19 Glamour girl, with heart of gold, was interested in physical effects (6)
*24 Result of firing at 34 1's balloon? (6)
25 Almost more saltiness at sea? This'll tell you (11)
*27 Wise, yet making some howlers (3)
*29 He comes from pelting once bottled name's removed (6)
31 Not so pleasant as gruel I dished (6)
32 Complication in story's done horribly (4)
33 Walks paths from which whole view is seen in retrospect (6)
*34, 1 Weak one's no end of honey in pot, eh? (3 words hyphenated, 13)
*35 Brings up end of line – after 'Hush!' what Alexander Beetle does? (5)
*36 Disney variation of theme, say, American in claim somehow? (7)

DOWN

*1 Hundred Acre Wood? Bird dwells in extremes of this (5)
2 Unbeliever or rebel? Either, about to revolt (7)
*3 Strong blow – losing test, tree's not up – what 29 became (4)
*4 Beast to dig a pit for – hurry to find there's almost nothing common in it! (9)
5 See punk cavorting in party dance (7)
6 Give proof of a time animal's home's put up inside (6)
7 Short woman with nothing for banking (4)
8 Matlo's stewed very nearly (6)
10 Wages money always right in list (7)
15 Slim pipe perhaps containing nothing but fluorescence (9)
18 Group of soldiers, see, hence organised about (7)
20 Softens maggots for falcons (7)
21 Does air that's foul produce what are found in fungi? (7)
22 Pressure indication, one provided with line (6)
*23 Bouncy one – *it*'s catching? (6)
26 Stiff part of corset to pinch, say (5)
28 Weak lie shown to be false deceit (4)
30 Flag not entirely green? All the colours are in it (4)

Solution to No. 1332



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ARE YOU SEEKING MALE OR FEMALE gay new friends etc? Long standing service, all areas. Stamp: G. Secretary, The Golden Wheel, Liverpool L15 3HT.

NEXUS MEMBERS don't need to place or answer ads from personal columns (they even have quite a social life going?). For info, phone 01-359 7656/6703, 041-221 1090, 061-834 8964, 0272 44365.

SINGLES PARTY in Hampstead home every Friday and Saturday. Tel. 435 7379.

THE JANE AUSTEN BUREAU — Introductions in all age groups immediately available. Free details from Brosnan House, Darkes Lane, Potters Bar, or call 44661.

FREE OFFER! Gentlemen 50-70 refined and solvent. Genuine introductions to discerning ladies. Details with s.a.e. to Hedi Fisher Consultancy, 14 Beauchamp Place, SW3. Tel.: 589 2384/794 6526. Also Jewish Branch.

JOAN REMICK MARRIAGE BUREAU — Let's help your winter go with a zing. Ring 01-741 7663; 4 Hammersmith Grove, W6.

PSYCHOSOCIAL MATCHING, 42 Lloyd Park Ave, Croydon, Surrey. Let a qualified psychologist find your ideal partners, friendship, love or marriage. Free details. Tel. 01-680 8659.

A FLASK OF WINE, A BOOK OF VERSE, and no-one to share 'em? Well, don't just sit there. Contact 'Status', the premier and reputable intro service for unattached professional people. 'Status', 88 Marylebone High Street, W1. 286 2128 (24 hrs.).

M. & F. JEWISH MARRIAGE Agency (Estab. 1958) has many attractive, intelligent young ladies seeking introductions for friendship/marriage. Write 32 North Hill, Highgate N6. 01-340 5616.

DATELINE'S PSYCHOLOGICALLY accurate introductions lead to pleasant friendships, spontaneous affairs and firm and lasting relationships including marriage. All ages, all areas. Free details: Dateline Computer Dating Dept. (NT), 23 Abingdon Rd, London W8. Tel. 01-937 6503.

GAYWAY, Europe's largest established personal dating service for intelligent gay men and women, with consistent success rate. 1st class stamp 1980 brochure or phone 01-348 4127 (24 hr brochure service). Gayway, 16 Jacob's Well Mews, George Street, London W1.

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THE ADULT CENTRE

(established over 10 years)
for Sex Aids and Appliances, Vibrators, French Ticklers, Exotic Undies etc.
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International sheath leaflet inc. DUREX brands s.a.e.

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Full-time YEAR with **SUPERVISION. Part-time PROGRAMMES** (morning and evening) **ILEA** recognised — SEPT 1980 — Apply now!

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WESTMINSTER PASTORAL FOUNDATION
23 Kensington Square, London W8.
(s.a.e. please)

THE POLYTECHNIC OF CENTRAL LONDON

Cultural and Community Studies Unit

MARXISM AND RELIGIOUS BELIEF: A REAPPRAISAL

Study Weekend: 22/23 March

Themes

Scientific method v. vulgar atheism.
The Marxist critique of religious institutions.
The ethics of revolutionary struggle.
Liberation theology: a new synthesis?
Religious commitment: 'a sign of contradiction'?

Course fee: £6.

Course tutor: Irene Brennan, Senior Lecturer in Philosophy, PCL. Irene Brennan is a Christian and a communist.

Further details from: **Short Course Unit, PCL, 309 Regent Street, W1R 8AL. Tel: 01-580 2020 ext. 221.**

ASSOCIATION FOR GROUP AND INDIVIDUAL PSYCHOTHERAPY TRAINING COURSE 1980-1983

Applicants, analysed or intending to have analysis with a recognised psychotherapist and having academic or professional experience relevant to working with people. The three year course comprises weekly seminars, ongoing groups, supervision for first patients.

Write to: **The Secretary, AGIP, 29 St Marks Crescent, London NW1.**

FRENCH, SPANISH, GERMAN, ITALIAN, Russian. Full-time day courses. Evening courses, Conversation (all grades), courses for GCE 'O' & 'A' levels & Institute of Linguists. Correspondence courses. Mentor for Languages, 15N Alfred Place, London WC1 (nr Goodge St tube stn). Tel 631 4635

CLASSICAL GUITAR TUITION in Blackheath, SE3. Individual or shared. Loan guitars for trial lessons. Solos, songs, ensembles, examinations, theory. 01-853 4706.

GERMAN Individual Tuition, all stages, by naturalised British subject, academically trained Germany. NW London. 01-435 8523.

Appeal

WHAT PRICE PEACE for 220,000 ZIMBABWEAN REFUGEES?

War on want — campaign against world poverty

'The Rhodesian authorities arrested Botswana government drivers and confiscated the trucks transporting Zimbabwean refugees back to Rhodesia.' — President Sir Seretse Khama, Botswana.

Uprooted from their homes and living in the grim conditions of refugee camps, 220,000 Zimbabweans rejoiced in the peace and look forward to returning to join in the reconstruction of independent Zimbabwe after 7 years of war.

But the reality is that the free movement of refugees back to their homes is being obstructed. At least 50,000, mostly children, are to remain in Frontline States for more than a year.

Are they to be forgotten people, as attention is focused on the internal situation?

WAR ON WANT will continue its support of these refugees with medical and educational materials. We will publicise their plight.

Will you help us ensure they are not forgotten?

Send your donation, £..... to: **War on Want, 467 Caledonian Road, London N7 9BE (NS).**

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Theatres

NOW IN ITS 5TH YEAR
TOM STOPPARD'S DIRTY LINEN
"Hilarious . . . See it!" (S.Times)
ARTS THEATRE
(01)836 3334/2132

ALDWYCH (Royal Shakespeare Company) 836 6404. Recorded booking info 836 5332. 'The Greeks'. Ten Greek plays given as a trilogy. See daily press for dates and times, RSC also at The Warehouse in premiere Howard Barker's 'The Loud Boy's Life' and at Piccadilly Theatre in Moss Hart and George S. Kaufman's 'Once in A Lifetime'.

NATIONAL THEATRE, 928 2252. 'Richard III', 'The Wild Duck', 'Thee and Me', 'When We are Married', 'The Iceman Cometh'. See daily press for dates and times or ring recorded information 928 2256.

Cinema

SCREEN ON THE HILL, 435 3366 (opp. Belsize Park Tube), 'My Brilliant Career' (U). Progs. 3.20, 5.20, 7.20, 9.20.

Meetings

GRESHAM LECTURES IN GEOMETRY
GEOMETRY UNDER CONSTRAINTS
by Professor C. W. Kilmister
3 one-hour lectures at The City University, Northampton Square, London EC1 at 6 p.m. 25 February, 3 and 10 March.

UNIVERSITY COLLEGE LONDON, Gower St, WC1E 6BT. Lunch Hour Lectures, 1.20 to 2. Admission free. 26 Feb. 'Silicon Chips and Beyond' by Dr R. A. Giblin; 28 Feb. 'Neglecting the Weight of the Elephant . . . On Thomas Mann's "Buddenbrooks" and the Realistic Novel' by Professor M. W. Swales.

ROY HATTERSLEY on 'The Labour Party and the Cuts' at 1 p.m. Sunday 2 March, The Pindar of Wakefield (Pub), 328 Gray's Inn Road, WC1. 30p. Fabian Society. All welcome.

WESTERN SAHARA: meeting at House of Commons, Committee Room 14, Wednesday 27 Feb. 7.30 p.m., with David Alton MP & other speakers. Sahara Action Committee.

COMMUNIST PARTY OF BRITAIN (Marxist-Leninist). Our Trade unions or Their Law. Friday 29 Feb. 7.30 p.m. Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, WC1.

ICA EVENTS, The Mall, SW1. 22 Feb. 7 p.m. Northern Ireland and the Modern British State; 26 Feb. 1 p.m. Fay Weldon on 'Puffball' — Lunchtime Literary Event; 27 Feb. 7.30 p.m. Northern Ireland Loyalism. 80p. 930 3647.

SHAW SOCIETY, Friday 29 February, at Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, WC1. Barbara Smoker on 'GBS and the ABC'. Coffee 6.30 p.m. Meeting 7 p.m.

RAMAKRISHNA VEDANTA CENTRE: Sunday lectures on religion and philosophy. Enquiries: 06285 26464.

SINGLES PARTY in Hampstead home every Friday and Saturday. Tel. 435 7379.

THEOSOPHY: S.a.e. for pamphlets, book list, programme. Sun. 24 Feb. 8 p.m. Open Q/A Meeting 'Psychic Laws & Phenomena'. ULT, 62 Queen's Gdns, London W2.

RICHMOND ADULT COLLEGE
Parkshot, Richmond, Surrey
01-940 0170
Principal: Mrs Margery Leslie BA
ONE DAY SCHOOL
Saturday 8 March 1980
10.30 a.m. - 3.30 p.m.
SPAIN in the 20th Century
'A SOCIETY IN CRISIS'
Lecturers:
Paul Preston PhD, Frances Lannon PhD
Fee: £1.55 (College members £1.25)

TOWARDS SELF-REALISATION
Free Public Lectures on Theosophy
Sunday 24 February 1980 at 7 p.m.
SIMPLICITY AND NECESSITY
Mr Edward Robinson
The Theosophical Society in England
50 Gloucester Place, London W1H 3HJ
Tel: 01-935 9261
All welcome. Refreshments before and after lectures.

Third World First

What's Happening in Kampuchea?

A one day National Student Conference with NUS support

— How the present situation evolved
— What is happening now
— The broader issues and the future

Speakers include: **Marcus Thompson (Oxfam) and Conrad Taylor (ICDP). Sat. 1 March, 11 a.m. - 6 p.m., Guild of Students, Birmingham University, Edgbaston.** Registration £2.50. Book on day, or from **3W1 (Kampuchea), 232 Cowley Road, Oxford, 0865 45678.**

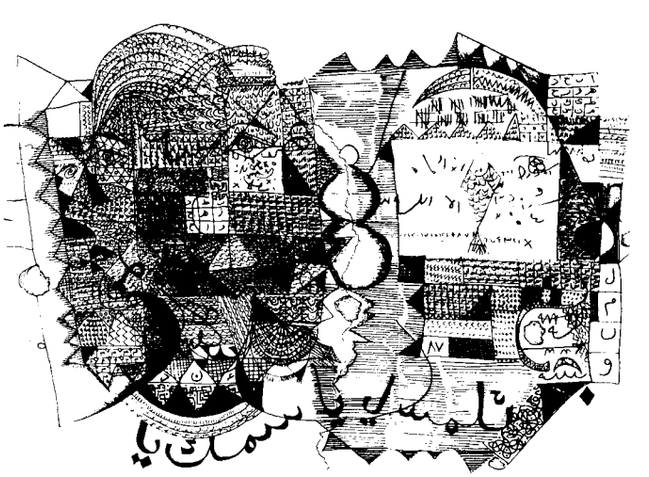
AJAR

(The Campaign to keep the Chester Gateway Theatre open for repertory) will be holding **A PUBLIC FORUM** to discuss **The Present and Future of Theatre and Public Expenditure Cuts** at 7.30 p.m. on Monday 3 March 1980 in The Town Hall, Chester. Chairman: The Mayor of Chester. Main speakers will include representatives from arts organisations, Chester City Council, Equity, The Ajar Compaign and Guest Speaker **WILLIAM ROACH** (Ken Barlow of 'Coronation Street'). All those concerned about the future of the present cuts policy are urged to attend.

ACTION CONFERENCE
To explore possibilities of
Co-operatives for Disabled People Nationally
Friends House, Euston Road, NW1
10 a.m. - 3 p.m. 8 March.
Details from **SHARE COMMUNITY** 01-542 6241.

WORLD DISARMAMENT CAMPAIGN
Initial meeting **Tuesday, 26 February, 7.30 p.m., Grand Committee Room, House of Commons. Chair: Frank Allaun, MP. Speakers: Lord Brockway, Rt Hon. Lord Noel-Baker, Judith Hart, MP, Robin Cook, MP, Mike Goodman, NUS. World Disarmament or World Death.**

The Iraqi Cultural Centre
177 Tottenham Court Road London W1 Tel: 01-637 5831
Mon-Sat 10-5 Admission Free



THE INFLUENCE OF CALLIGRAPHY ON CONTEMPORARY ARAB ART
20 February — 14March

University of London
GOLDSMITHS' COLLEGE
School of Adult and Social Studies
Lewisham Way, New Cross, London SE14 6NW
Holography
Not a gimmick but an art.
Michael Wenyon suggests fresh approaches to this new type of three dimensional photography and shows colour slides of work by holographic artists.
7 p.m. Friday 22 February 1980. Tickets in advance (s.a.e. please) or at the door. Price 60p/30p for Retirement Pensioners or Full-Time Students.
Only 5 minutes from New Cross & New Cross Gate stations.

University of London
GOLDSMITHS' COLLEGE
School of Adult and Social Studies
Lewisham Way, New Cross, London SE14 6NW
John Mansbridge Remembers
A special illustrated lecture by the son of Albert Mansbridge, founder of the Workers' Educational Association.
6.30 p.m. Tuesday 26 Feb. 1980
ADMISSION FREE — NO TICKETS REQUIRED.
Only 5 minutes from New Cross and New Cross Gate stations.

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Send cheque/PO to: **Security Consultants Advisory Network (SCAN), Suite 500, Chesham House, 150 Regent St, London W1R 5FA.**
01-439 6288
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LOANS FROM £50. Salaried Persons Postal Loans Ltd, 175 Regent Street, London W1. Tel. 01-734 1974.

IMMEDIATE ADVANCES. £100-£25,000. Regional Trust Ltd, 8 Clifford St, New Bond St, London W1. 01-734 5983 or 2914.

Accom. Vacant

B. & B. in Chiswick, £3.50 for night — ckg facs. Home aft. 7 p.m. 01-995 0385.

SEMI-BASEMENT 2-roomed flatlet on canal near King's Cross. Separate entrance. £25 p.w. 01-837 0650.

ISLEWORTH: Large, well furn. room, suit quiet person. C.h. Share bathroom, kitchen. £18 per week. Box 7766.

FREE ACCOMMODATION in NW London, see Personal column.

DE BEAUVOIR TOWN N1. To let 3-4 bed. architect's house, 1 year, £380 p.c.m. Tel. Ms Brown 930 8903 or 249 6516 (p.m.).

SHORT LET London N10. Academic's fine 4 roomed flat. Quiet, bright, good transport, c.h., colour TV, etc. 20 March 2 mths. £85 p.w. Deposit & refs. 444 6737 (weekends only).

Accom. Wanted

ARTS SPONSORSHIP EXEC., 27, grad., male. Sks share or unf. accom., immed. or later at sensible rent. SW, W, NW London. Chris Crowcroft 01-221 7883 (work).

VISITING ACADEMICS. Landlords, we urgently require flats & houses within easy reach of the British Museum & the University. Helen Watson & Co. 01-580 6275/9.

YOUNG MAN, 24, seeks s/c. flat or room in flat, from mid-March in W6, W10, W12, W14, SW6, SW15. 748 3020 ext. 5319 (days).

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